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THE CENTRALITY OF THE CHURCH COVENANT
AMONG THE EARLY SEPARATE BAPTISTS
ON THE NEW YORK FRONTIER

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Wayne Robert Brandow
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THE CENTRALITY OF THE CHURCH COVENANT
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Wayne Robert Brandow

Read and Approved by:

Michael A. G. Haykin (Faculty Supervisor)

Date _____

To my father, Roy H. Brandow, who taught me self-reliance by expecting tasks assigned to be completed without excuse and through whose generosity I was able to pursue this degree, and to the LORD, who gave me such a father.

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PREFACE

Little did I know when I accepted the call to the Bible Baptist Church of Galway (originally called Second Baptist) on September 11, 1977 that, in addition to being put in trust with God's flock in a small village in upstate New York, under my care would be placed a treasure trove of Baptist history. This was a real discovery, for apart from the church's pastors and clerks, few eyes had seen them. In the church's historical collection were contained conference and covenant meeting record books, treasurer's ledgers, corporation records, letters, minutes of women's missionary societies, and booklets that encompassed what is now a little over 230 years of history of Baptist life since the days of President George Washington. In these pages there is a history to be told of Separate Baptist life in a pioneer setting, from Baptist life in the early American republic, to Victorian Baptist life in a summer resort village, then, after a devastating fire burned down the hotels and stores, a diminished Baptist presence with the coming of Eastern European Catholic immigrants who purchased the small farms in their longing to escape factory life. Although this thesis will only cover the first church record book, there is a past to be shared, and that is why the first to be acknowledged in this preface is Southern Baptist Theological Seminary for accepting such an aged student into its Master of Theology program bent on sharpening his skills to write the history of this Baptist church. I am older than all my teachers, and the students are for the most part the age of my grown daughters. It has been a richly rewarding program, one that I heard about from a friend my wife and I greatly admire, Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin. I met Dr. Haykin, years ago at a Banner of Truth Minister's Conference which occasioned a couple of visits by him to Galway to celebrate our church's rich history with his always engaging lectures. It

was at a Bible Conference in New England that Dr. Haykin told me about the program.

Secondly, in a seminary setting there are those who greatly enhance the program and labor in the background. I am greatly indebted to two PhD students who have been a great help. They were Jonathan Swan, my Thesis Fellow, who was assigned to oversee this thesis's progress, and Trey Moss, the Assistant Director of Doctrinal Studies, both of whom were a real asset to the school in their availability, courteousness, and patience. Of invaluable assistance was Archivist, Dr. Adam Winters, who helped me to access archival material at the James B. Boyce Centennial Library. Another person tied into the program at Southern I am grateful for is John Banks, a classmate, who wrote his thesis on Jonathan Edwards Jr. As we are researching the same era, we have shared our discoveries and have recommended books to each other. A thorough researcher, I am convinced that John will add to the knowledge of Christianity in the Northeast in those early years after the founding of our nation.

Thirdly, I would like to thank my brothers and sisters in Christ's little flock here in Galway of whom I am a pastor. The Lord has truly knit our hearts together. They have been loving and supportive of Martha and me over the years. We first came to Galway as newlyweds, only married a little over a year; she was twenty-four and I was twenty-five. I am now sixty-eight years old. The church has been patient. To make ends meet, I was a letter carrier for thirty years, dividing my time between the church and the United States Postal Service. Then, once I was retired, I was back in school. We raised our family of three girls here, Joy, Heather, and Lindsay. The church has treated our family like it was their family, and no one has been praying harder that I make it through this course of study than they have. This thesis would not have been written without their loving encouragement.

Fourthly, years ago, I was invited out to eat by some pastor friends at a Banner of Truth Conference. Also invited was Iain Murray and we became acquainted. I told him

of a paper I had researched and written on Charles Finney. I sent it to him and in the thank you note he encouraged me to write—something that no one had ever done before. When Iain’s book, *Revival and Revivalism*, came out, he sent me an early copy with the following note in the flyleaf: “with warm greetings and gratitude for your help.” Every life and event contain a story that is begging to be told. Skilled are those who can tell it in an engaging way. For me, Iain Murray and Michael Haykin, have modeled how to do church history, by telling the story, and making it accessible for all. Also, a special thanks is to Dr. Jenny-Lyn de Klerk, who used her editorial skills to proof this thesis and made sure it was in conformity to *The Southern Seminary Manual of Style*.

Lastly, where would I be without my favorite “historian,” Martha. I proposed to her under the Triumphal Arch at Valley Forge. We honeymooned at Concord and Lexington on Patriot’s Day weekend. We took our girls, as they were growing up, throughout New England to see historical sites. It was never a drudgery. It was fun! Who loves to watch history specials with me? Martha! Who reads the history books that I have been wanting to read, but did not have time, and cannot wait to tell me what she learned, leading to great discussions? Martha! Who likes early American décor and had turned the parsonage built in the year 1800 into a history lover’s haven? Martha! Who has New England Puritan and Pilgrim ancestors? Between us, we both do! We are as American as they come! I am writing this history with the encouragement of my favorite history lover. I thank God for bringing Martha into my life.

When Martha and I first read the church records over four decades ago, we asked the same question. What is all this about the covenant meeting? You are about to find out.

Wayne R. Brandow

Galway, New York

December 2020

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

After the Revolutionary War, New Englanders poured into the New York frontier. Lands in New York belonging to the Five Nations of the Iroquois became open for settlement, as most of the tribes had sided with the British, forcing them to flee at the end of the war either to Canada, or reducing them to life on a reservation.¹ Their vacated land, around the Mohawk River, resulted in a natural passageway west to Ohio and beyond through the Appalachian mountain chain. Like transportation corridors of today, such as an interstate highway that attracts development, the newly opened land around the Mohawk River became inundated with settlers. This was particularly true of Saratoga County, New York, which was formerly a Mohawk Indian hunting ground, and the entranceway to all points west.² Its forested land, situated north and heading west from the confluence of the Mohawk and Hudson Rivers, was like a magnet drawing New Englanders who were willing to clear land and start out afresh.

Interspersed in this great migration were Separate Baptists, a spiritually vibrant body of believers who were Calvinists committed to the Great Awakening's call for heart religion and who were ardently missions minded.³ They were not alone in their zeal for God. At the time, the Northeast was enveloped in the excitement and the turning to God

¹ After the Tuscarora Indians were added to the confederacy, and settled nearby in 1722, it became known as the Six Nations.

² It was Albany County until February 7, 1791. Nathaniel Bartlett Sylvester, *History of Saratoga County* (1878; repr., Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishers, 1979), 11.

³ Not much has been written about the Separate Baptists of New York when areas west of the Hudson River saw significant population growth and church expansion. The explosive growth of Separate Baptists in North Carolina under Shubel Sterns and Daniel Marshal is well documented. This thesis hopes to partially fill this gap.

known as the Second Great Awakening. Revival was in the air.⁴ Churches were springing up everywhere. To assist in this church planting endeavor, the Separate Baptists formed associations and the work soon spread beyond the newcomers settling in Saratoga County, to central and western New York.⁵ They reached out to the Indians and traveled into Canada, planting churches amidst their once-Tory neighbors.⁶ Their evangelistic fervor did not stay stateside, but, like William Carey in England, they lifted their eyes to the world. In time, Adoniram Judson's work in Burma would be especially in their hearts and on their lips.⁷

This thesis will examine in detail the church record books of the Second Baptist Church of Galway, a Separate Baptist Church in the New York frontier. The extant original records of this church cover a span of over 230 years. They give a window into Baptist life throughout the history of our nation. The earliest records chronicle the

⁴ One such revival came to Galway under the labors of Asahel Nettleton in 1820. Within a few weeks, 250 were "rejoicing in the hope"—a phrase used to describe those who embraced Christ as their Savior—and 160 were added to the Presbyterian church in the village alone. *Narrative of the Revival of Religion within the Bounds of the Presbytery of Albany, in the Year 1820*. (Schenectady: Isaac Riggs, 1821), 22. See, Philo Hurd's eyewitness account. Philo Hurd, "Revival of Religion in Galway, N.Y." *Religious Intelligencer* no 7 vol 5, (New Haven, July 15, 1820), 110–112; Reuben S. Smith, *Recollections of Nettleton and the Great Revival of 1820* (Albany, NY: E.H. Pease & Co. 1848), 87–91; Bennet Tyler, *Nettleton and His Labours: The Memoir of Dr. Asahel Nettleton* ed. Andrew A. Bonar, (1854; repr., Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 111.

⁵ The rapid growth of churches in New York State is chronicled in Charles Wesley Brooks, *A Century of Missions in the Empire State as Exhibited by the Work and the Growth of the Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1900).

⁶ The outreach to the Indians and to the Canadians at this time from churches in Saratoga County can be found in Stuart Ivinson and Fred Rosser, *The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956). A missionary, who labored among both Indians and Canadians at this time was Lemuel Covell, the pastor of the Fourth Baptist Church of Galway, NY. His life is told in Deidamia Brown, *Memoir of the Late Rev. Lemuel Covell, Missionary to the Tuscarora Indians and the Upper Province of Upper Canada* (1839; repr., Lexington, KY: Forgotten Books, 2012). See also, Gerald L. Priest, "Lemuel Covell (1764–1806)," in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Regular Baptists in America.*, ed. Terry Wolever (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2015), 6:203–243.

⁷ For a fascinating study of the zeal for missions both at home and abroad during this time, see Albert Lenox Vail, *The Morning Hour of American Baptist Missions* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907).

beginnings of the church in 1789, the first year of George Washington’s presidency. This paper will limit its enquiry to the first handwritten record book which covers the first two decades of its existence and includes the settlement of its first pastor, the notable Joseph Cornell (1747–1826).

Joseph Cornell was the embodiment of everything good about the Separate Baptists.⁸ His life reflected Separate Baptist ideals. He was a farmer-preacher who pastored three churches in their formative years in Manchester, VT; Galway, NY; and Providence, RI. He was a leader in Baptist associational life and a missionary to settlements in central and western New York, as well as Canada. Later in his life, he was an advocate for the education of ministers. The students at Brown University loved him, and he was a Trustee of the Hamilton Institute, some of whose graduates labored with Adoniram Judson in Burma, including one of Galway’s own pastors; Eugenio Kincaid.⁹ The nineteenth century Baptist historian, David Benedict, gave Joseph Cornell almost equal space with Richard Furman, the well-known Baptist minister of Charleston, SC in his, *Fifty Years Among the Baptists*.¹⁰

Looking at the records, it becomes immediately apparent how central the church covenant was to the life of a Separate Baptist Church. Through covenanting together, or as they would say, “to enter into covenant,” the church was formed. The covenant regulated the life of the believers because watch-care was important to them.

⁸ There are numerous sources for the life of Joseph Cornell, the first settled pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Galway but Terry Wolever offers the best account of his life to date. Terry Wolever, “Joseph Cornell (1747–1826)” in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Regular Baptists in America*, ed. Terry Wolever (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2014), 4:287–325.

⁹ Alford S. Paton, *The Hero Missionary: or a History of the Labors of Rev. Eugenio Kincaid*. (New York: H. Dayton, 1858).

¹⁰ It is amazing that Cornell, a farmer-preacher, would even be mentioned in a chapter on the notable Baptists in David Benedict’s lifetime. This shows that Joseph Cornell, an unknown Baptist in our day was well-known in his own day. David Benedict, *Fifty Years Among the Baptist* (1860; repr. San Bernardino, CA: University of Michigan, 2014), 42–44.

The members shepherded each other. Reading the church records is like reading Presbyterian session minutes; except, in Separate Baptist Churches there would be no ruling elders. The Separate Baptists would be fortunate to even have a settled minister among them, who was called Elder [Pastor]. This was because the number of churches was growing faster than the number of elders to supply them. Those elders would be called pastors today. The church under examination started without a deacon or elder. It was just believers covenanting together in a church relationship.

By observing the use of the covenant in the church records, one notices that congregational polity is strikingly obvious. Historically, there are two distinct ways of governance among Calvinistic Baptists: one that is Confession-oriented, and Presbyterian influenced (i.e., Regular Baptist), and another that is church covenant-oriented and Congregational (i.e., Separate Baptist). The basic structures of the two are poles apart: a church framework consisting of a plurality of elders with deacons versus a church structured by a pastor with deacons. The former was found in England and the Middle Colonies, whereas the latter came from New England.¹¹ The Separate Baptists are a distinctively American phenomenon. They are an offshoot of a region in which the following forces and events helped to shape a distinctive Separate Baptist identity. These molding dynamics were: New England Puritan congregationalism, the Halfway Covenant, the Great Awakening, the Separate Congregationalist movement, and the American Revolution.

The aim of this thesis is to show that among the Separate Baptists in the Northeast, the “exercise of the keys,”¹² in the forming of a church and admitting and

¹¹ Although the New England Congregationalists held to three church officers—elders (i.e., pastor, teacher, ruling elder), assisted by deacons and widows—most churches only had a sole pastor. Their support was levied by taxes and most communities could not afford a plurality of elders. Walker wrote, “In a large proportion of the churches of New England the ruling eldership did not survive the first generation,” and the only lay office was that of deacon. Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, vol. 3, (1894; repr., n.p: Hard Press Classics Series, n.d.), 228, see also 223, 229.

¹² The exercise of the keys; (i.e., the keys of the kingdom of heaven), refers to delegated

removing members, as well as other aspects of church life—such as watch-care over church members (i.e., discipline), securing an Elder (i.e., a minister), and appointing delegates to inter-church meetings—were vested not in a board of elders, but in the congregation, through their promised commitment to the Lord and each other by means of the church covenant.

First, this thesis will examine the background of the Second Baptist Church of Galway church covenant, that is, the history of church covenant use in New England Congregationalism. Second, it will examine the church covenant of the Second Baptist Church of Galway, consider its source, or author, and explain its structure and meaning. Third, it will examine the early record books to see how the covenant was used in the life of the church. Lastly, it will analyze the value of using church covenants today to form a church, frame congregational polity, disciple believers in what is expected of them as followers of Christ, and regulate the health and well-being of a church.

authority from Christ in church matters (Matt 16:19–20; 18:18).

CHAPTER 2

BACKGROUND OF CHURCH COVENANT USE

The Separate Baptist use of a church covenant originated in New England congregationalism. How did the church covenant come into such widespread use in New England? We must start when it was first used.

The Pilgrims that settled Plymouth, Massachusetts in 1620 came as an already established church and thus, the Salem Church was the first church formed in New England. The Salem Church came into being by using a covenant. This was not common at the time. To accommodate people living in an English commonwealth, all that was needed was to open the doors for worship. According to English custom, they were members already. In that day, an Englishman became a member of a church by being born in the parish and baptized as a child. All Englishmen were viewed as Church of England men.¹ Therefore, the use of a church covenant was a landmark occasion. The rest of the New England churches did the same.

At first, in these newly forming churches, like the English Separatists before them in England, all that was required was a profession of faith. Edmund Morgan wrote the following of Thomas Hooker (1586–1647), who just required this first level for admittance:

In his *Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline*, Hooker maintained that “if a

¹ Such a view was expressed by the Anglican, Richard Hooker (1554–1600) when he wrote, “There is not any man of the Church of England, but the same man is also a member of the Commonwealth; nor any member of the Commonwealth which is not also [a member] of the Church of England.” P.G. Stanwood, ed. *Richard Hooker, Of Laws of Ecclesiastical Policy* 1648; repr., Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1981), 8:319. If the King of England, being the head of the Church England, granted a charter to settle land, then it seems reasonable that church membership rights would be present, either explicit or implicit, for those Englishmen in the land granted.

person live not in the commission of any known sin, nor in the neglect of any known duty, and can give a reason of his hope towards God” he was fit for membership.²

However, a relation of one’s experience of saving grace was added in most of the New England churches, and such would prove problematic for the Congregationalists in later years. We will proceed to discuss this development in church polity, from no covenant to covenanting together based on a profession of faith, and to a covenanting that included a telling of one’s experience of a renewed heart.³

No Covenant to Covenanting Together

In 1629, the covenant of the Salem Church bound people together in a church relation based upon promises made to God and to each other to live under the authority of God’s Word. Their covenant reads: “We Covenant with the Lord, and one with another; and doe bynd ourselves in the presence of God, to walke together in all his waies, according as he is pleased to reveale himself unto us in his Blessed word of truth.”⁴

Ola Elizabeth Winslow explains, “The significance of this brief pledge lies not only in its simple expression of a high purpose, but also in the fact that Church of England communicants had written it themselves and that in so doing they were laying the foundation stone of a new church order.”⁵ This new church order did not mean that the early Puritan ministers no longer saw themselves as loyal churchmen to the Church of England. If one asked the Puritans who came to New England, most would say they were

² Thomas Hooker, “Survey of the Summe of Church Discipline” (1648: facsimile repr., London, UK: Forgotten Books, 2017), part 3, chaps. 1, 5.

³ This trajectory from doctrinal assent to testimony of one’s regeneration is at the heart of Edmund Morgan’s classic book, *Visible Saints*. See Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea*. (1963; repr., Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1965).

⁴ Williston Walker, *Creeeds and Platforms of Congregationalism* (1893; repr., Middleton, DE: Forgotten Books, 2012), 116.

⁵ Ola Elizabeth Winslow, *Meetinghouse Hill: 1630–1783* (1952; repr., New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1972), 22.

loyal. They were neither schismatics nor Separatists.⁶ They were seeking to practice non-conformity within the walls of the Church of England. What was nonconformity? The Church of England minister was expected to conform to the prescribed rites and practices of the church and the Puritans were seeking to reform the church to a biblical pattern of worship. To do so meant they were not able to conform. Thus, they sought to practice nonconformity, and still considered themselves loyal to the Church of England.

Francis Higginson, Salem's founding teacher, was a Puritan Church of England minister who felt the church needed to reform by becoming more aligned with Scripture.⁷ He was not seeking to separate from the church. When he left England for the New World and the coastland of England was disappearing over the horizon, he said,

We will not say, as the separatists were wont to say at their leaving of England, "Farewel, Babylon!" "farewel Rome!" but we will say, "farewel, dear England, farewel, the Church of God in England, and all the Christian friends there! We do not go to New-England as separatists from the Church of England; though we cannot but separate from the corruption in it: but we go to practice the positive part of church reformation and propagate the gospel in America."⁸

The new requirements for church membership were upsetting to some but encouraging to others. A newcomer to New England may be a member of the church in England, but across the sea, in this newfound colony of the British commonwealth, he was not a member until he was admitted to membership. Not only did membership requirements change, but church life was different. Commenting on Anglican practice in

⁶ The spread of Congregationalism among the Puritans in England is interesting reading. John Robinson, William Ames, Hugh Peters, and John Cotton influenced many. Non-separating Puritans became known as Independents in England. They included well-known Puritans such as John Owen, Jeremiah Burroughs, Thomas Goodwin, Philip Nye, John Davenport, William Bridge, Thomas Hooker, and John Cotton. How they came to hold such a view is addressed in Geoffrey Nuttall, *The Visible Saints: The Congregational Way, 1640 – 1660* (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell, 1957), 11–18.

⁷ Cotton Mather also celebrated the striking change in church order taking place by calling Higginson, a Janus, a *Nov-Anglicanus* (a new Anglican), a Noah of New England in Cotton Mather, *The Great Works of Christ in America: Magnalia Christi Americana*, vol. 1 (1852 repr., Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 1:354–366. Janus was the Roman god of new beginnings, characterized by a face that looks in two opposite directions. Similarly, Noah was a man of two worlds: the pre and post flood worlds, and he also is identified with a new beginning marked by a covenant.

⁸ Mather, *Great Works of Christ in America*, 362.

colonial Virginia, a reflection of church life in England at the time, Christina Leigh Heyrman wrote,

Belonging to the Church of England did not require individuals to testify to a conversion experience or to submit to an ascetic code of conduct enforced by the clergy and watchful lay members. Nor was any premium placed on strict doctrinal conformity, for, unlike the members of the Reformed tradition, Anglicans had little taste for dogmatism and tolerated differences of opinion on many points of theology. Instead, their clergy encouraged a temperate, practical piety among the laity through liturgical observance and moral admonition.⁹

However, for that poor Englishman who longed for the familiar practice of church membership with no covenant requirement, the magistrates and the ministers were cut out of the same cloth in Puritan New England. If the Englishman caused trouble, he could be deported back to England where he came from, and there he could then worship as he pleased.

From Profession of Faith to a Testimony of Saving Grace

The following year, 1630, began the mass migration into New England which swelled the population. The churches that sprung up were likewise formed by way of a covenant. At first, a mere profession of faith that accompanied the use of a church covenant was all that was necessary to become a member. However, it was not long before relating the experience of the work of grace in one's soul was added and became normative in the Massachusetts Bay churches.¹⁰ Michael McGiffert wrote how this new test for membership worked itself out in Thomas Shepherd's church in Cambridge,

⁹ Christine Leigh Heyman, "The Church of England in Early America," *Divining America*, TeacherServe©, National Humanities Center, accessed Jan 21, 2020, <http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/tserve/eighteen/ekeyinfo/chureng.htm>. Dr. Heyrman has a PhD from Yale and is Professor of History at Delaware University.

¹⁰ Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 88–96. Notice the reference to "Massachusetts Bay churches." According to Morgan, Thomas Hooker—who left to found Connecticut—thought that a profession of faith was enough to become a member of the church without relating one's experience. Hooker's more lenient attitude did not thwart him from earnest, searching preaching to reach people for Christ. Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 106–108.

Massachusetts:

Members were admitted by a method peculiar to New England – one that most of the world’s Christian communion would have dismissed as improper or impolitic. The Cambridge participants confessed their faith, which was normal enough, but then went on to tell “what work of grace the Lord had wrought in them”—which was definitely unusual. More than assenting to a creed or memorizing a catechism was needed to get into these new self-made fellowships. It took a credible report of an encounter with God—really, a sequence of encounters—that Puritans recognized as the experience of conversion and calling. New England’s congregations were meant to be made up of saved souls—Puritans called them “saints”—and the sanctity of those saints had to be made “visible”—that is, manifest in their lives.¹¹

It might be assumed that the Pilgrims in Plymouth influenced the Puritans who came to America ten years later in 1630 to embrace congregationalism. The truth is the Puritans in England, and the Puritan refuges in Holland were talking about the form of church government already, and many were committed to their view prior to coming to America. John Cotton came to America three years after the first wave and he wrote that his views on the practices of the New England churches were not new but in accord with his own understanding prior to his leaving England. He would not hazard crossing the sea to join with heretics.¹² The newly arrived Puritans of 1630 became acquainted with John Robinson’s Pilgrim flock, yet New England Congregationalism came primarily from English Puritan non-conformity rather than English Separatism.¹³ A well-known Puritan theologian of the time, William Ames (not a separatist, but a friend of Robinson),¹⁴ wrote

¹¹ Michael McGiffert, *God’s Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepherd’s Cambridge*. (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), 135–136. *God’s Plot* contains Thomas Shepherd’s autobiography, journal, and actual written accounts of the work of grace related by individual members of Shepherd’s church to gain membership. It has only 33 of the 50 narratives of church members’ conversions still extant recorded by Thomas Shepherd. *The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth* also contains similar accounts. See Morgan, *Visible Saints*, 90–91, 91n48.

¹² Robert Baille said that Cotton changed his views once he came to America. Cotton denied his assertion in John Cotton, *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (1648; repr., Breinigsville, PA: Kessinger Publishing’s Rare Reprints, 2009), 20–21.

¹³That Puritan (Boston, Massachusetts Bay) roots came from non-conformity and Pilgrim (Plymouth) roots came from Separatism was the conclusion of Perry Miller and Larzer Ziff, Larzer Ziff, *The Career of John Cotton: Puritanism and the American Experience* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962), 78.

¹⁴ Ziff wrote that Cotton claimed, “Ames not Robinson, was the guide for Massachusetts Bay,” 200–201. Ziff, *Career of John Cotton*, 200–2001.

that believers do not constitute a church until they covenant together, confess their faith, and pledge obedience.¹⁵ Multiple factors brought about the change of church polity in New England.¹⁶ The Pilgrim Separatists in Plymouth, no doubt, had some influence upon the flood of Puritans who came to Massachusetts. However, they were not the primary agent that would bring about change among the Boston Puritans.¹⁷

Since the Puritans were concerned about heart religion and not just a mere profession of faith, it is not surprising that they would look for evidences of regeneration in those seeking church membership.¹⁸ This extra element would cause a crisis within a generation. The Puritans believed that church membership was for believers and their children: infants were baptized but were not received into full membership until they came of age and could relate their experience of saving faith. Yet, there was a large percentage of those who could not do so. This precipitated a dilemma when these churchgoers devoid of saving grace sought baptism for their children.¹⁹ The problem was

¹⁵ William Ames, *The Marrow of Theology: William Ames 1576–1633*, translated from the 3rd Latin ed., ed. John D. Eusden (1629; repr., Durham, NC: The Labyrinth Press, 1968), 180.

¹⁶ The spectrum of Congregationalism included: (1) Separatism: Robert Browne, Henry Barrowe (who held derogatory views of the Church of England), (2) Semi-separatism: John Robinson, separate but cordial to the Church of England, (3) the non-separating Congregationalists: Thomas Goodwin, Phillip Nye, Sidrach Simpson, William Bridge, and Jeremiah Burroughs, who would be known as the five “Dissenting Brethren” at the Westminster Assembly, and (4) those who stressed the need to relate one’s experience of grace: John Cotton and many New England ministers.

¹⁷ The Pilgrims were a contributing factor. A friendship was formed with the settlers of Salem by Plymouth the winter before they started the Salem church. A severe sickness so plagued Salem that Governor Endicott of Salem sent to Plymouth for the help of Dr. Samuel Fisher, a physician and a deacon of the Plymouth church. He not only brought a physician’s care, but also explained the polity of the Plymouth church. Endicott discovered there was much concord between them. Williston Walker, *A History of the Congregational Churches in the United States*, vol. 3, (1894; repr., n.p: Hard Press Classics Series, n.d.), 100–101.

¹⁸ John Bunyan gets to the heart of this concern in *Pilgrim’s Progress* in the dialogue of Christian and Faithful with Talkative. Talkative was well versed in the Scriptures—just as one taught through catechetical training—but devoid of regeneration. The Puritan ministers realized that one could profess Christ and not truly know Him (Matt 7:21–23). Faithful addresses this issue when he asked Talkative how a work of grace in the soul discovers itself. John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim’s Progress* (1891; repr., Birmingham, AL: John L. Dagg Publishing Co., 2005), 147–150.

¹⁹ According to Ziff, “in 1643, only 1,708 of the close to 20,000 residents of Massachusetts Bay had been admitted to citizenship.” To be a voting member one needed to be a church member. Ziff, *Career of John Cotton*, 210.

addressed in synods that occurred in the 1640s,²⁰ however, it was not until 1662 that the half-way covenant was proposed. The resulting proposals were that the unregenerate parents could remain as members, but would not be communicant members (i.e., full members able to take communion). Their children could be baptized upon the parent's profession of the faith and a moral life. Thus, these parents (who could not testify of a conversion experience) and their children would both be under the watch-care of the church.

In 1687 Solomon Stoddard, an influential Connecticut Valley minister in Northampton, Massachusetts, advocated open communion. His small booklet *The Doctrine of the Instituted Churches Explained and Proved from the Word of God* reveals his strong leaning toward the parish system of Old England. Stoddard argued that the visible, gathered church was a mixed multitude of saints and sinners, and he saw no biblical warrant for the use of a church covenant.²¹ He believed the members of the community should be the members of the church without strict admission standards. In spite of Stoddard's position, most Congregational churches in New England retained their church covenants, but amidst prosperity (e.g., expanding economic growth from farming,

²⁰ The English Civil War also took place in the 1640s and the ministers of New England were just as concerned about overseas interference with their New England Way by the Presbyterians under Cromwell as the Anglicans. A national Presbyterian oversight imposed upon them would be just as detrimental as Episcopalian oversight. It was the Bishops, especially the Archbishop William Laud, who had caused all their troubles. Once Charles was removed from the throne and from being head of the Church of England, it was time to reinstall Jesus to His rightful place as head of the church. The Cambridge Platform was adopted in 1648 to state their Congregational views.

²¹ Solomon Stoddard, *The Doctrine of the Instituted Churches Explained and Proved from the Word of God*, facsimile. (1700; repr., n.p.: Franklin Classics, n.d.), 7–8. Stoddard's views on the church did not quench his passion for the lost. He had several harvest times or seasons of revival throughout the course of his ministry. Stoddard was Jonathan Edward's grandfather. Edwards would join him as co-pastor, and, upon Stoddard's death, would succeed him as pastor of the church in Northampton. Edward's differing views from his grandfather regarding the nature of the church would later be one of the contributing factors in his dismissal from the Northampton church. Beeke wrote about Stoddard, "He offered full membership rights of the church to any professing Christian, even if that person had little or no assurance about being in a state of saving grace." Joel R. Beeke and Randall J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans: With A Guide to Modern Reprints* (Grand Rapids: Reformation Heritage Books, 2006), 560. In Stoddard's day, the worldview of the common man in New England was such that most would agree that there was a God, and that Jesus was both God and Savior. A Christian culture dominated and influenced all aspects of life, both overtly and covertly.

mercantile, and maritime endeavors) and troubles (e.g., King Phillip’s War from 1675–1678, the Salem Witch trials from 1692–1693, and conflict with the French from 1688–1763 in four wars), religion declined.

Impact of the Great Awakening and the American Revolution

When the Great Awakening came in the 1730s and stirred New England, many embraced the heart religion of the first-generation Puritans. God poured out his blessing through the itinerant Anglican evangelist George Whitefield and others. The revivals were both embraced and opposed. Many who welcomed the revival, left their Congregational churches that opposed such revival to form Separate Congregational churches. This move destroyed the parish system of New England. Originally, there was but one church for every community which was supported by the civil authority (the magistrates) with mandatory attendance and taxes. According to William Barker and Samuel Logan Jr, “During the height of the Awakening, many Christians, perceiving that their own pastors were not fervent (or fervent enough) in supporting the Awakening, simply left their churches and started others.”²² The Great Awakening was disruptive to long standing social norms. When a Separate church was stated in a New England town or village, in the eyes of many, a schismatic church was planted in the same community with the long-established church of their forefathers. Conversely, the Separates, reasoned that they were in sync with New England’s founders who sought to be free from the corrupting influence of Bishops and King in their pursuit of a pure church. If the Pilgrims separated, why could not the Separates do likewise?

Seeking to avoid the troubles that infant baptism brought upon their Puritan forbearers who sought a regenerate church membership, some Separates believed that

²² William S. Barker and Samuel Logan Jr, ed. *Sermons that Shaped America: Reformed Preaching from 1630 to 2001*. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P & R Publishing, 2003), 147.

only believers who could relate their experience of saving grace should be baptized and covenant with a church. These believers, who rejected infant baptism, became Baptists.

Last, the American Revolution also shaped the making of the uniquely American Separate Baptists. The Great Awakening helped prepare the desire for separation from England. Since New Englanders had already separated from churches, it made it easier to separate from a nation.²³ A democratic principle was infused into these Calvinistic Baptist children of the Puritans, known as Separate Baptists, through both the Great Awakening and the war.²⁴ A great leveling was underway in a previously hierarchical society. Ministers (and magistrates) previously came from the upper strata of society. After the war, all were perceived as equals in the society at large. For the Baptists, it meant that ministers could come from any strata of society (e.g., merchants, farmers, and craftsmen) if they were called by God.

The insistence upon a regenerate membership—though it proved troublesome in time for the Congregationalists of New England due to infant baptism—was not a problem for Separate Baptists coming out of the Great Awakening, who baptized believers only in obedience to the Lord’s command (Matthew 28:18-20), and who sought a regenerate leadership and people to compose the church. This brief overview sets the historical backdrop for examining a great treasure, a sampling of handwritten records—the earliest document being 230 years old—from one of the Separate Baptist churches, the Second Baptist Church of Galway.

²³ Barker and Logan, *Sermons that Shaped America*, 147–49.

²⁴ Two valuable sources of the beginnings of the Separate Congregationalists and Baptists are C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England 1740–1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (1962; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), and Ebenezer Frothingham, *The Articles of Faith and Practice, with the Covenant, That is Confessed by the Separate Churches of Chrif in General in This Land*. (1750; repr., Milton Keynes, UK: Lightning Source, n.d.).

CHAPTER 3
THE COVENANT OF THE SECOND BAPTIST
CHURCH

When comparing the Second Baptist Church, Galway church covenant with the church covenant of the First Baptist Church, Middleborough, MA, it becomes readily apparent that the former is a copy of the later. Middleborough was a Separate Baptist Church started by Isaac Backus, who was the most prominent Separate Baptist pastor in New England. The Middleborough church covenant was written thirty-three years earlier by Backus in January 1756.¹ In his book, *Baptist Church Covenants*, Charles Deweese said that not only did Backus write the covenant but it was also read aloud at the founding of the church in Middleborough and each member joining the church signed it.² It is unknown how Baptists in Galway acquired this covenant. Joseph Cornell–Galway’s first pastor–was known by Backus, as he is mentioned numerous times in Backus’s diary.³ However, Cornell was not present at the founding of the Galway church. Deweese

¹ Copies of Backus’s church covenant can be found in Charles W. Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990), 139, and Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of the Rev. Isaac Backus* (1858: repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1991), 338. There are a few variations such as Backus, “with a *perfect* heart,” Galway, “with a *sincere* heart;” Backus, “the ways of *God*,” Galway, “the ways of *Godliness*;” Backus, “according to *the glorious gospel of God*,” Galway, “according to *the Scriptures*;” and Backus, “promising to hold communion together in the *worship* of God,” Galway, “promising to hold communion together in the *fellowship* of God.”

² Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 44, 139–140.

³ Isaac Backus, *The Diary of Isaac Backus (1741-1806)*, ed. William G. McLoughlin, 3 vols (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1979). There is a brief biography of Cornell by McLoughlin, 3:1354–1355. Backus’ entries include: 2:1093, 3:1353, 3:1462, 3:1481, 3:1490-91, 3:1497–1498. Joseph Cornell was preaching at Backus’ church when Isaac’s wife died on November 24, 1800. The entries about her death in Backus’ diary are as follows:

Nov. 18. My wife still groes weaker, and last night had a hard purging. Elder Cornell of Galloway [Galway] in New-York state came here the 17th and preacht seven times to our people in the week.

Lordsday Nov. 23. He preacht twice here, but I was so poorly as not to attend meeting.

Monday Nov. 24. A heavy day. My wife said not a great deal about dying. Elder Rathburn was here

may have found the answer when he wrote, “The Backus covenant had wide influence throughout New England. Many churches and associations used the covenant or variations of it.”⁴ The covenant of the Second Baptist Church of Galway in its original spelling is found in appendix one of this thesis.

Isaac Backus (1724–1806) is most known for being a champion of the separation of church and state. Separate Baptists were being levied taxes for the support of the Congregational ministry even after the American Revolution. Backus and another northern Separate Baptist, John Leland (1754–1841), who had moved to Virginia, were instrumental in getting freedom of religion through the Bill of Rights. Backus was also an apologist for the Separate Baptist cause, a leader in the movement, and a Baptist historian. In *A History of New England Baptists*, he explained that, “in general, their [i.e., Separate Baptists] faith and practice come the nearest to that of the first planters of New England, excepting in the single article of sprinkling infants,” hence, this paper’s delineation of New England Puritan Congregationalism to give background material.⁵ Backus then mentions fourteen items that came from this Puritan connection. Numbers six and seven are especially pertinent to this thesis on covenants: “6. That according to God’s institution, regenerate souls are the only materials for particular Christian churches. 7. That the right way of building such churches is by giving a personal, verbal account to the church of what God has done for their souls, to the satisfaction of the

on the 12th and prayed with her, and when he asked her what she would have him pray for, she said, ‘I am not so much concerned about living or dying, so as to have my will swallowed up in the will of God;’ and on the 17th she said much the same to Elder Cornell when he prayed with her. For many weeks she could take no hearty food, and rarely took any drink without vomiting after it, and she had much inward pain, but bore it with great patience, and never expressed any fears of death. Thus she wasted away until about 6 o’clock this morning, when she expired without any struggles. (Backus, *The Diary*, 3:1462).

⁴ Dewesse, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 45.

⁵ Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*. (1871; repr., Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, n.d.), 2:231–232.

church.”⁶ Commenting upon this passage, C.C. Goen wrote in his classic work on the Separates:

Nothing indicates the transformation of the doctrinal character of New England Baptists better than Backus’ amazing statement that the movement of which he was practically the heart and soul stood in the tradition not of John Smyth and Roger Williams (though he revered those men highly), but of John Robinson and the purest of the Pilgrims!⁷

It is important to note that there were Baptists in New England before the Separate Baptists. When thinking of the first Baptists in America, Roger Williams often comes to mind. The American stream of Baptists that started with Roger Williams, by the time of Backus, had been diminished to a nearly dried up trickle in comparison with the mighty flowing stream of the Separate Baptists. Backus was saying that the origin of the Separate Baptists is not found in Williams’s dried up well. Rather it flowed from an entirely different stream sourced by the heart religion of the early Puritans and Pilgrims. Puritan ideals had nearly died when it was revived with vigor by the Great Awakening. Backus set the Separate Baptists in the raging stream that resulted from the soaking torrential outpouring of the Holy Spirit which was manifested in a full-blown revival. Backus is saying that although they were Baptists, their roots were Puritan and Congregational. Because of the evangelistic and mission-mindedness of the Northern Separate Baptists one cannot understand Baptist life apart from a study of the Separate Baptists and the Puritans of New England who were the source of their evangelical and Calvinist piety.

⁶ Backus, *History of New England*, 2:232.

⁷ C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England 1740–1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (1962; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 273. Smyth and Williams were of the Baptist strain. John Robinson was the pastor of the Pilgrims who settled Plymouth; however, he never made it to Plymouth, MA.

Examination and Explanation of the Covenant

The table below displays the covenant of the Second Baptist Church of Galway. The left column contains the covenant, and the right column points out the material discussed. The covenant is logically divided into two parts based upon the covenant of grace: 1) The covenanting Christian’s promises to God and 2) the covenanting Christian’s promises to others. Table 1 contains the first section of the covenant.

Table 1. Church Covenant of the Second Baptist Church of Galway, part 1⁸

<p><i>The wording of the covenant with modern punctuation and spelling</i></p> <p>We do now in the presence of the Great All-seeing and Most Glorious God and before angels and men give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and avow Him this day to be our God and Father, our Savior, and Leader, and receive Him as our portion forever.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">OUR PROMISES TO GOD Considering Who God Is, One’s Promises to God</p> <p style="text-align: center;">OUR TRIUNE GOD</p> <p>FATHER</p> <p>In the presence of our All-seeing and glorious God</p> <p><i>We give ourselves up to the Lord Jehovah, our Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) to be our portion forever.</i></p> <p>He is our God (Father, Savior, Leader) Father, Son, Holy Spirit</p>
<p>We give up our selves unto the Lord Jesus Christ to adhere to Him as the head of his people in the covenant of grace, and rely on Him as our Prophet, Priest, and King to bring us to eternal blessedness.</p>	<p>SON, JESUS CHRIST</p> <p><i>We give ourselves up to the Lord Jesus Christ</i></p> <p>He is the head of His people</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>in the covenant of grace</u></p> <p>He is our prophet, priest, and king</p> <p><i>We rely upon Him to bring us to eternal blessedness</i></p>

⁸ “The Covenant” in *Church Record Book of the Second Baptist Church, 1789–1808*, n.p. (italics used to stress what we are to do, considering who God is).

Table 1 continued

<p>We acknowledge it our everlasting and indispensable obligation to glorify our God by living a holy, religious, and godly life in this present world in all our several places and relations, and we do engage by the assistance of God's Divine Spirit to improve all our time, strength, talents, and advantages for His glory and the good of our fellowmen</p>	<p>HOLY SPIRIT</p> <p><i>We are obliged to glorify our God by living a holy, religious, and godly life</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">in this world, in all our places and relations</p> <p><i>We do engage with the Holy Spirit's help</i></p> <p><i>To improve all our time, strength, talents, and advantages for His glory and the good of our fellowmen</i></p>
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The Covenanting Christian's Promises to God

The church covenant begins with a description of the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His name is Jehovah, and He is all-seeing and glorious. The Lord Jesus Christ is seen in this church covenant as the head of the church in which His people are covenanting together. In a Baptist church there is no Pope or ecclesiastical hierarchy. Christ is the believer's prophet and speaks through His Word (i.e., the Bible). Christ is the believer's priest, thus there is no salvation apart from Him. Christ is the believer's king, and so all loyalty and obedience are due Him. The Holy Spirit aids us in all our duty and devotion to God. God is our Father, Jesus is our Savior, and the Holy Spirit is our helper. The Holy Spirit guides and directs us, therefore He is designated as "Leader" in the covenant.⁹

What does the believer promise as he joins with fellow believers in this church using the church covenant? He promises to find his portion—his soul's delight and treasure—in God. He promises to rely upon Christ, to trust Him. At the heart of the Christian life is faith, which entails trusting God for the salvation of one's soul. Faith is also necessary when it seems God is nowhere to be found, when troubles assail His

⁹ "The Covenant" in *Church Record Book*, n.p.

beloved follower, and when all is darkness, evil is triumphing, and light is scarce. The believer is called to trust God in bereavement and sorrow, in sickness and pain, in deprivation. The believer is to endure, have hope, trust God in all things, glorify God by living a holy, religious, and godly life, and live purposefully to improve all his time, strength, talents, and advantages for God's glory and the good of others.

This covenant starts with eyes lifted to God. In recognition of Jesus as being his Lord and his God, the believer humbly and sincerely enlists in the cause of Christ by joining with others of like mind in a local church.

The next aspect to notice is the focus on what God has done for the Christian. The church covenant is based upon the covenant of grace. This is easily seen in the table above. In the middle, for all to see is, "in the covenant of grace."¹⁰

It is regrettable that some only associate covenant theology with infant baptism.¹¹ The connection does not have to be there. The Separate Baptists did not accept infant baptism, but they and other Baptists embraced covenant theology. Baptists see baptism as a visual portrayal of the Gospel (i.e. – Christ's death, burial, and resurrection Rom 6:1–4, 1 Cor 15:1–4), which they have embraced by faith. The Galway church framed its church covenant and Articles of Faith (see table A1 in appendix 2) under the rubric of covenant theology. The covenant of grace is explained in Chapter 7 titled, "Of God's Covenant" in the *1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith*. and was held by the Baptist pastor Charles H. Spurgeon¹² as well as Baptist theologians John Gill, J. L. Dagg,

¹⁰ "The Covenant" in *Church Record Book*, n,p,

¹¹ Covenant theology is an interpretative biblical framework that affirms that God has one people, the saints of God in both the Old Testament and the New Testament, whom He has savingly called out of the fallen human race, by grace (unmerited mercy) through faith in Christ their redeemer. Infant baptism is argued into this framework by pedobaptists, but it is not necessary to do so.

¹² Spurgeon wrote, "I have compiled this little manual from the Westminster Assembly's and Baptist Catechisms, for the use of my own church and congregation." Charles H. Spurgeon, *A Catechism with Proofs Complied by C. H. Spurgeon* (n.d.; repr., Choteau, MT: Gospel Missions Press, 1980), 2.

and James P. Boyce.¹³

Because this Separate Baptist church covenant starts with our Triune God and His salvation, which is expressed in a distinctly Baptist version of covenant theology, the gospel becomes foundational to the life of the believer, who is joined in a church relation. As Christ loved him, he is to love his brothers and sisters in Christ. The covenant relationship with God is reciprocal and integral to any church life. The covenant of grace instituted by God results in believers reaching out to God and to others.

The Covenanting Christian's Promises to Others

Loving God and loving others are the sum of God's law (Matt 22:34–40). Christians have been redeemed by faith to walk in new obedience. In the table below, the duties of Christians one to another are clearly delineated in the second half of the church covenant. Again, as in the previous table, the covenant is in the left column and the points discussed are in the right column.

Table 2. Church Covenant of the Second Baptist Church of Galway, part 2¹⁴

<p><i>[The wording of the covenant]</i></p> <p>promising by Divine help to walk in our houses with a sincere heart and to train up those under our care in the ways of godliness</p> <p>and we also give up ourselves to one another in covenant, promising to act toward each other in the love of God, and to watch not only against those evils which are reckoned gross, but also against all foolish talking and jesting, which is not</p>	<p>OUR PROMISES TO OTHERS</p> <p>Promises to Our Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to walk in our houses with a sincere heart• to train up those under our care in godly ways <p>Promises to Church Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to give up ourselves in covenant to one another• to act toward each other in the love of God• to watch against gross evils (murder, adultery, lying, theft)• to watch against foolish talking and jesting
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¹³ Boyce was educated at Princeton and had Charles Hodge as his professor in systematic theology. "It was Hodge who put Boyce onto his favorite Calvinistic theologian, Francis Turretin." James Petigru Boyce, *Abstract of Systematic Theology*. (1887; repr. n.p.: Christian Gospel Foundation, n.d.), iv. Turretin embraced covenant theology. Boyce's *Abstract* is patterned after the Westminster Shorter Catechism.

¹⁴ "The Covenant" in *Church Record Book*, n.p.

Table 2 continued

<p>convenient, and vain disputing about words and things which gender strife, and against disregarding promises and not fulfilling engagements, talking and backbiting, spending time idly at taverns or elsewhere, and vain unnecessary worldly conversation on the Lord’s Day, and whatsoever evil that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the Scriptures,</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to watch against vain disputing about words and things that gender strife • to watch against disregarding promises • to watch against not fulfilling engagements • to watch against talking (gossiping) and backbiting • to watch against wasting time in taverns or elsewhere • to watch against dishonoring the Lord’s Day • to watch against any evil contrary to sound teaching according to the Bible
<p>promising by God’s help to hold communion together in the fellowship of God and in the ordinances and discipline of his house, according as we are or shall be guided by the Spirit of God, in his word, expecting that He will yet further and more gloriously open his Word and the mysteries of his kingdom, flying to the blood of the everlasting covenant for the pardon of our many errors, and praying that the Lord would prepare and strengthen us for every good word and work to do His will, working in us that is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Promises to the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to hold communion together in the fellowship of God and in the ordinances and disciplines of His church • to be guided by the Holy Spirit • to expect that the Holy Spirit will open His Word and the mysteries of His kingdom • to fly to <i>the blood of His covenant</i>, for forgiveness • to pray that the Lord would prepare and strengthen us for every good word and work • to do His will that we might be well pleasing in God’s sight and that He might be glorified

As previously stated, the church covenant is structured like the two tablets of the law—one oriented towards God and the other towards humanity. The former is found in table 1 on page eighteen, and the later in this table.

The Decalogue was given to a redeemed people at Sinai. It is noteworthy that in Romans—Paul’s great epistle that features justification by faith—begins and closes with an inclusio, “the obedience of faith,” (Rom 1:5, 16:26). The NIV has translated Romans 1:5 “the obedience that comes from faith.”¹⁵ One is to walk with God in newness of life. Not surprisingly, the Ten Commandments were included in all the catechisms of the past

¹⁵ Rom 1:5, NIV.

to instruct believers in the ways of God, as they show what love looks like in the new obedience that springs from genuine faith (1 John 5:2).

As God has been gracious to the believer, the believer is to be gracious to others within the domains of the family, church, and society. The phrase, “flying to the blood of the covenant”¹⁶ denotes that even the believer is in a constant need of forgiveness because he still sins. Since Christ laid down His life for him, the Christian should humbly serve others in love. The believer is “to watch” over others, that is, to be so concerned about the welfare of others to give needed help whether materially in tangible ways or spiritually by means of a word of encouragement or reproof. In the covenant, gross sins (e.g., murder, adultery, theft) are not delineated, but relational sins are highlighted, such as arguing, gossiping, and not keeping promises. Then there are other areas to watch out for such as not wasting time (i.e., indolence, laziness), revering God, and being alert to false doctrine.

When it comes to church life, covenant fidelity entails that one should attend the worship services with an attentive heart, that is ready to receive the preached Word, and join in the shared church family life of his brothers and sisters in Christ.

In the covenant, the believer is promising to live for God, to trust God, and to improve his gifts that he might serve God. He is to love his family, his neighbors, and especially his brothers and sisters in Christ, and remember to avoid gross sins, guard his tongue, keep his promises, give attendance to and hold firmly to the truth of God’s Word, and, lastly, to not forsake gathering together in a church relationship.

¹⁶ “The Covenant” in *Church Record Book*, n.p.

CHAPTER 4
THE USE OF THE COVENANT OF THE SECOND
BAPTIST CHURCH

In her grandmother's recipe box, Dr. Elizabeth Peck of Clifton Park, NY found a news clipping of an obituary of Abijah Peck (1758–1848), her third-great grandfather. This clipping was from the *New York Baptist Register* (November 12, 1848) and can also be found in the appendix of a book written by Stephen Wright, *The History of the Shaftsbury Association From 1781 to 1853*.¹ Abijah died when he was ninety years old and his obituary reads, "In 1784 he removed from Connecticut to Galway, N.Y. which was then a wilderness, with few scattered inhabitants."² The record continues, "After a little time, a few Baptists collected and held meetings in his workshop [he was a weaver];³ he taking the lead of the meetings. A revival followed, which resulted in the organization of the second Galway church."⁴ Wright's and Crumb's account of the

¹ The author interviewed Dr. Peck in the late 1970s and was given a copy of the obituary, later to find it in Stephen Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association, From 1789 to 1853* (Troy, NY: A.G. Johnson, Steam Press Printer, Cannon Place, 1853), 338–41.

² Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 339.

³ Rev J. W. Crumb offers more details about Abijah Peck and the founding of the Second Baptist Church of Galway. Abijah Peck became a prominent minister. Ordained in 1801, he pastored in the Baptist church in Clifton Park, NY for nearly 50 years, a church he helped establish. Crumb explained, "At 24 years of age (1782) he [Peck] was made a trophy of Divine grace. Naturally ardent, he, like Saul of Tarsus, took his characteristic with him, in church relation, and exhorted his fellows "to be reconciled to God." Two years later he left the place of his nativity (Greenwich, CT) to follow his trade in the then far West, at Galway, Sar. Co., N.Y., at that time an unbroken wilderness, save here and there a settler. Here he not only found plenty of loom labor, but ample opportunity to exercise himself unto godliness. *And there are some living, who remember attending conference and prayer-meetings in his weave shop.* Here for about five years he is found fulfilling Paul's injunction, "Diligent in business, fervent in spirit serving the Lord." This brings us down to 1789, when he and fourteen others met in a barn, to devise plans for forming a Baptist church. This resulted in he, and seven others, on August 27th, taking the solemn covenant to sustain the religious standard" (italics mine). J. W. Crumb, *The Old Paths: or a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Clifton Park Baptist Church being a Discourse Delivered at the Celebration of the Fifty-eighth Year of Said Church, Held Feb. 25, 1853* (Utica, NY: D. Bennett, 1853), 4.

⁴ Wright. *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 339.

beginnings of the Second Baptist Church of Galway harmonize with what is found in the church record book, which says:.

Whereas god in his Great Wifdom and tender mercy has So ordered it that We A number of Baptift Brethreing From Different parts and Different Churches have Remov^d Into this land in order to get bread for ourfelves and our Children: And Depriv^d of the Oportunity of Afsembling and Enjoying Gofpel priviledge of Chriftian fellowship So great that we have Attempted to meet together time and again in Conference in order to gain an Acquaintance With one another.

At A Conference meeting held at Abraham Warings on the 13th of August AD 1789 the Brethren prefent were afk^d the Question, on Suppofition We Could be agreed in Sentiment and gain A fellowship With Each other Whethers they Would be Defirous of Entering into Covenant Relation All Anferewd in the Affirmative and Manifefte A Defire to profecute the Matter. And A Meeting Was then appointed for that purpofe to be held at James Warrins Barn in Galloway On the 25th August 1789.⁵

These brief introductory remarks found in the church record book show the first use of a church covenant. In this first meeting for the purpose of establishing a new church in the settlement of Galway all were asked whether “they would be desirous of entering into covenant relation.” Today, the question could be stated, “Would you like to start a church?” Thus, the church covenant was important to defining a church. The church is a society of Christians who have “entered into covenant relation” with each other.

Using the Church Covenant to Start a Church

The records clearly show the procedure to start a church using a church covenant as its foundational document. There are three documents in the beginning of the record book in this order: 1) Articles of Faith, 2) How to Practice, and 3) The Covenant. These three documents as well as commentary on them, are contained in the appendices of this thesis.

⁵ *Church Record Book of the Second Baptist Church, 1789–1808*, 1. The Church Record Book is a handwritten document. Over the years someone penciled in page numbers. The beginning pages containing the Articles of Faith, How to Practice and The Covenant are not numbered. Medial s is printed as a f in this copy. The text was written before Webster standardized spelling and punctuation is virtually nil. The original spelling and grammar are retained in this quote.

When reading the church records, one can visualize what occurred. The record continues (with updates to punctuation and spelling).⁶

Met agreeable to appointment on the 25th August 1789. Meeting opened by prayer, proposed to choose brother Wait Palmer, Moderator for the day, and brother James Warren, Clerk. Then it was proposed that each one of the brethren and sisters that had been baptized and belonging to other churches to give a short narrative of their experience [that] led to Gospel ordinances in order that a fellowship might be gained. Then Deacon James Greenfield related his experience. Also: Abijah Peck, John Lamb, James Warren, Edmund Hewitt, Thomas Stillwell, Joseph Coats, Nathaniel Keeler, Wait Palmer, Elias Stillwell, Sister Greenfield, Sister Keeler, Sister Lamb, Sister McMilliam, Sister Waring.⁷

There was a democratic process to this meeting; it was a meeting of equals.

Neighborliness was an essential characteristic of a pioneer settlement.

Neighbors would come together to make a clearing in the wilderness, and with axe in hand they would jointly chop down the forest and roll the logs into a pile for burning. The clearing would become an opening, necessitating help from others to make the land ready

⁶ All grammar and spelling in the *Church Record Book* will be modernized to facilitate reading.

⁷ *Church Record Book*, 1. Wait Palmer was the grandson of the well-known Elder Wait Palmer who baptized Shubal Sterns. Sterns was instrumental in planting many churches in the South. Elder Wait Palmer's fingerprints are all over the early history of Galway. Elder Palmer was the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Stonington, CT and his wife's kin, Simeon Brown, was the first pastor of the Second Baptist Church of Stonington, CT. Wait married Mary Brown. From these two churches came a large migration to the Galway, NY. The Browns, Palmers, Smiths, and Hewitt, who settled in Galway, were all related. The first pastor of the First Baptist Church of Galway, Simeon Smith—who will play a recurring role in the early history of the Second Baptist Church of Galway—was from Stonington and married Elizabeth Brown. The second pastor of the First Baptist Church in Galway was Abel Brown in 1795. According to Nathan Sylvester, “[The First Baptist church of Galway] was first composed of twenty-even members, who came in a body from Rhode Island.” Nathan Bartlett Sylvester, *History of Saratoga County* (1878; repr., Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishers, 1979), 362. Stonington is on the CT and RI border. Several early Galway settlers came from Bristol County, MA which borders Rhode Island on the east, Rhode Island itself, and New London County, CT, which borders Rhode Island on the west.

The standard history of early Stonington is Richard Anson Wheeler, *History of Stonington* (New London, CT: Press of the Day Publishing Company, 1900). For the most comprehensive study of the church history of Stonington in the days of Palmer and Sterns as well as an informative account of the life of Elder Wait Palmer, see the early chapters of John Sparks, *The Roots of Appalachian Christianity: The Life and Legacy of Elder Shubal Sterns* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2005), 1–47.

Here is an amazing providential tidbit. After his pastoring in First Galway, Abel Brown would serve as pastor of the Baptist church in Martindale, NY then known as East Hillsdale, (1805–1827) the church the author of this thesis attended as a boy and in which he came to Christ. Then, Brown served in the Baptist church in Egremont, MA (1829–1835), this author's mother's home church. All three churches were part of the Shaftesbury Baptist Association. Wright, *History of Shaftesbury Association*, 361.

for planting. There were communal house, barn, schoolhouse, and church raisings. Many hands and strong muscles were needed to raise the heavy hewn beams held together with massive wooden pegs. On the frontier men and women worked together, lending each other a hand.⁸ The backgrounds of a number of these pioneer farmers, reveal that many had served in the recent War of Independence from Britain. Most were in their thirties when they came to Galway with young children.⁹ They were rugged and resolute. There are no elders overseeing the process in starting the church.¹⁰ They all pitched in to have a Baptist church in their community. This is the only time James Greenfield is mentioned as a deacon; he may have been a deacon in his home church, but his office did not carry over to the church they were about to establish. After discussing the qualifications of a deacon, Abijah Peck would be chosen as their first deacon on April 22, 1790.¹¹

Are You a Baptized Christian?

This brief passage shows the first step in constituting a church. Those gathered who were members of churches would relate their experience that led to their baptism and church membership. As was previously stated in chapter one of this thesis, it was not enough to profess faith in Christ, one must also testify to how one came to faith. Was there a true convicting work of the Holy Spirit exposing one's sinfulness and a true

⁸ Alice Morse Smith has an excellent chapter on neighborliness. Alice Morse Smith, *Home Life in Colonial Days* (1898; repr., Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2006), 221–238.

⁹ In 1789 the names and ages of those meeting to decide to start a church are : James Greenfield, 35; Abijah Peck, 31; James Warren, 41; Edmund Hewitt, 34; Thomas Stillwell, 61; Joseph Coats, 33; Nathaniel Keeler, 32; Wait Palmer, 36; Elias Stillwell, 36; Margaret Greenfield, 32; Jemima Keeler, 31; Beulah Lamb, 29; Avis McMilliam, 30; Anne Warren, 39. The ages were discovered from extensive research using ancestry.com.

¹⁰ These records show the practice of congregational church polity. Though Reformed in their theological beliefs (as seen in the Articles of Faith) the practice of the Separate Baptists is decidedly different than the Presbyterian-influenced modern Reformed Baptist movement.

¹¹ *Church Record Book*, 11. Another evidence that James Greenfield was not a deacon in the Second Baptist Church of Galway is that in the record on Oct. 13, 1798 a discussion took place regarding whether deacons should be ordained after delegates were sent to an ordination of a deacon in a sister church. They debated whether their deacons, Wait Palmer and Nathaniel Keeler should be ordained. By 1789 Abijah Peck had already moved on to Clifton Park, NY but James Greenfield was still a member and was not mentioned in the discussion of their current deacons. See *Church Record Book*, 73.

turning to Christ in faith as Savior accompanied by a resolve to live for Him in new obedience? Thus, a regenerate membership was sought by those who had a genuine life with God and had expressed that new life through baptism. They died to their old life, were buried with Christ in baptism, and raised with Christ out of the baptismal waters to new life. Without this Spirit-generated life, it would be impossible for them to walk in the new obedience they were seeking to pledge in the church covenant.¹²

On that summer August 25th day, the record concluded:

Each one related their experience and led to baptism which was to the satisfaction of each other. The day being spent, they adjourned till Thursday, August 27th AD 1789 to Abraham Waring's in order to see if we could be agreed in the great doctrine of the gospel and the rules of God's house.¹³

Notice, the testimonies given were to the satisfaction of all. The keys to the kingdom were given to the church members to determine who would be admitted or not admitted into the church. No one is a member yet; this is still explaining the process to membership. Being satisfied that genuine Christians are present, they proceed to see if they are in doctrinal agreement.

Is There Doctrinal Agreement?

The next meeting took up the matter of agreement upon the teaching of the Scriptures.

Met according to adjournment. At Abraham Waring's, August 27th AD 1789, meeting being opened by solemn prayer. First made choice of brother Wait Palmer to take the lead of the meetings for the future, both conferences and meetings for public worship. Also, brother James Warren [was] chosen Clerk to keep a record for the future. Then proceeded to converse on the great doctrines of the Gospel and found ourselves agreed on the following heads of doctrine.

1^{ly}. That all mankind since the fall of Adam are in a state of total depravity.

2^{dly}. That the salvation of all mankind is alone by free grace.

3^{dly}. The final perseverance of all saints.

¹² See Rom 6:1–14, Gal 5:16.

¹³ *Church Record Book*, 2.

- 4^{thly}. All persons that are regenerated and are born again belong to Christ's mystical Church.
- 5^{thly}. The covenant made betwixt the people and the church [is] the door by which they enter into the visible church and none but baptized persons [are] to be admitted to membership and none [are] fit subjects for baptism but believers.
- 6^{thly}. In order to receive members, it is necessary for all the members of the church both male and female to gain satisfaction of their adoption lead[ing] to baptism and the Lord's Supper.
- 7^{thly}. A member covenanting with a church: Their all [is] to be given up to God's service in the world and all their gifts and faculties to the service of the church.
- 8^{thly}. The church has a right to all the gifts of her members and to call every gift forward to improvement in the church and place them in that order that shall be for the glory of God and their comfort.
- 9^{thly}. In all the acts of the church the male members only [have] a right to vote and they an equal right.
- 10^{thly}. The church, when organized [is] an independent governing body [. . .].
- 11^{thly}. No matter of difficulty [is] to be brought into the church without the gospel rule first being attended to as to private labor.
- 12^{thly}. The first day of the week [is] to be observed as the Christian Sabbath and every member [is] strictly to keep that day and attend on public worship and [to] abstain from all worldly visits.¹⁴

These twelve heads of doctrine were drafted for this occasion. The more detailed Articles of Faith and How to Practice found in the appendices of this thesis and beginning of the church record were crafted later.

The more polished Article of Faith came about in the following manner. There was a conference meeting held at Elias Stillwell's house on Thursday, February 25, 1790 in which Elders and messengers from area churches examined the state of the Second Baptist Church of Galway and extended to it fellowship as "a church of Christ in sister relation."¹⁵ Prior to that conference a little housekeeping was in order to be ready for that day. The Articles of Faith from Elder Smith's church, First Baptist Church, Galway were read and adopted on January 1, 1790.¹⁶

¹⁴ *Church Record Book*, 2–3.

¹⁵ *Church Record Book*, 13.

¹⁶ *Church Record Book*, 8.

Continuing with an explanation of the first drafted heads of doctrine to agree on, number eight needs a little elaboration. It reads: “The church has a right to all the gifts of her members and to call every gift forward to improvement in the church and place them in that order that shall be for the glory of God and their comfort.”¹⁷ This is tied in with head of doctrine number ten concerning the independency of the church. It is asserting each church has the right to call a pastor from its own membership rather than having one imposed from an outside ecclesiastical council. Head number eleven was about following Matthew 18 in the discipline of church members. The “gospel rule” was that private dealing was to take place with offended brethren before bringing it to the church. With satisfaction to each other’s “experience that led to baptism” and agreement in points of doctrine, only one step remained, covenanting together.¹⁸

Covenanting Together

The fifth head of doctrine stated that covenanting was the door into the admittance of church membership. With that final act, the Second Baptist Church of Galway came into existence; it was a church from that point forward. Here is the record for the rest of the conference meeting held on August 27, 1789:

Then the brethren and sisters proceeded to make covenant by rising on their feet in a solemn manner and covenanting with each other to take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments for their rule of faith and practice and to watch over one another for good and to bear one another’s burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ in keeping covenant the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of love and peace.

The brethren that were present and did entered into covenant were: James Greenfield, James Warren, Wait Palmer, John Lamb, Abijah Peck, Edmund Hewitt, Avis McMilliam, Anne Waring.

Brother Keeler was present but not being satisfied with brother Greenfield’s principles as to the Sabbath desired time of consideration on the matter.¹⁹

¹⁷ *Church Record Book*, 2.

¹⁸ *Church Record Book*, 3.

¹⁹ *Church Record Book*, 3. Brother Keeler’s way was made clear by the next conference meeting as “brother Greenfield had given him full satisfaction” concerning the Sabbath. *Church Record*

When the act of entering into solemn covenant with God and each other was accomplished by these eight individuals, a church was established on the New York frontier.²⁰

Using a Covenant to Maintain the Life of a Church

On average, two conference meetings were held each month to conduct the business of the church, often at 1:00 p.m. on the second and fourth Thursdays or the second and fourth Saturdays of each month. A church meetinghouse was not built and occupied until 1794 so these meetings took place in homes.²¹ The first conference meeting each week was also called a covenant meeting due to the special focus on the church covenant.²² There is a formulaic structure in the record book for covenant meetings. It reads: “Met in conference at [place] [date]. Meeting opened by prayer. [the names of those renewing the covenant] proceeded to renew the covenant with God and each other and to watch out over each other for good.”²³

The names of those present who renewed the covenant were entered into the

Book, 3.

²⁰ It is interesting that although the church came into existence on August 27, 1789, many subsequent accounts of the date of the “constitution” of the church, places it in the year 1790, no doubt referring to the church being extended the hand of fellowship by surrounding churches as “a church of Christ in sister relation,” which occurred on February July 1, 1790. *Church Record Book*, 13.

²¹ The site of the first meetinghouse was on the land of Elias Stillwell at the end of present-day Mack Road just off Parkis Mills Road. This is on high ground a little north-west of the present Village of Galway, NY. The settlers that started the Second Baptist Church cleared land around the Glowegee Creek. The present meeting house was built in 1845 in the Village.

²² It seems the only publication that describes how covenant meetings were conducted is Augustine S. Carmen, *The Covenant and the Covenant Meeting*. (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1898). Others mention the existence of covenant meetings. Carmen’s book mentions John Humpstone, a pastor at Second Baptist Church of Galway later than the time frame of this thesis. Carmen, *The Covenant*, 32. Humpstone ended up being a pastor of a large church in Brooklyn, NY that looked like a cathedral. Dr. John A. Broadus of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary preached at the dedication of the new church building. See George E. Clarke, *Emmanuel Baptist Church in Brooklyn: In Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Founding of the Church, 1881–1931* (Brooklyn, NY: Emmanuel Baptist Church, 1931), 11.

²³ This template used by the church clerks is abundantly found throughout the *Church Record Book*.

church record book. Time was always given for members who did not attend the first conference (i.e., covenant) meeting to renew the covenant at the second monthly meeting. The frequent mention of the church covenant reminded all members of their covenant obligations to God and each other.

On occasion, some of those present might refrain from renewing the covenant. For example, as noted in the entry for July 1, 1790, “Samuel Messenger, John Carpenter, and Bulah Lamb did not renew the covenant, the reasons in their own mind.”²⁴ Although failing to fulfill covenant obligations may mean that two men from the church would be sent to your door to “cite you to your duty,” not renewing the covenant due to “reasons in their own mind” did not fall in that category, as seen in the fact that such a reservation was accepted but not disciplined.²⁵ The act of renewing the covenant does not appear to be in preparation for partaking of the Lord’s Supper, because it was necessary to have a minister present to administer the Supper, and when there was no settled minister serving them nor a visiting minister present the covenant would still be renewed.

The church covenant bound together the men in particular, as they had an equal vote in the affairs of the church and were to seek the glory of God, the welfare of their brothers and sisters in Christ, and the advancement of the church through their discussion and vote. Therefore, the oversight and business of the church was a covenanted concern for each male member, and it was a congregational mode of thought and practice. Responsibilities often delegated to *a session of elders* in a Presbyterian system became the concern of *every voting member* among the Separate Baptists. These included: the admission of new members, ensuring that regular worship was maintained, and that baptism and the Lord’s Supper were available to the flock, maintaining peace

²⁴ *Church Record Book*, 14.

²⁵ This reservation to covenant together appears to be a temporary measure, perhaps something needed to be tended to before taking such a vow to fulfill it in all sincerity before God. Such a concern over sincerity would be understandable, as the Christian life is a continual battle with sin and repentance on this side of heaven.

and harmony and the pursuit of orderly Christian living through church discipline, fostering inter-church relations, developing leadership and the calling, maintaining, and removing a pastor.

Admission of New Members

Thus far in the church record book, membership was only extended to those who were church members elsewhere prior to coming to Galway; they would form the charter membership. Now that a church had been established, the records show how new members were admitted. If a prospective member was from another church of like faith, they would follow the same steps the charter members did, which included: 1) relating their experience that led to baptism, 2) being in doctrinal agreement²⁶ and 3) entering into solemn covenant with God and their brothers and sisters in Christ in this local church. A letter from the former church of the one seeking admission to membership was also often given or requested at admission.²⁷

As was previously stated for the new convert, membership required baptism and only elders were authorized to administer the ordinance.²⁸ The first account in the record book of adding new members reads:

At a conference meeting held at Lewis Roger's Sept. 17th 1789. Meeting being opened by prayer . . . Elder Burris being with us as an administrator the door was opened for any that had a mind to go forward in baptism to relate their experience

²⁶ Bulah Lamb and Jemima Keeler, who were present at the August 25th meeting to look into starting a church and had then already related their experience leading to baptism, were asked on September 10th "if they were desirous of entering into covenant relation with the church." They said, "Yes," but they "desired to be informed of the Articles of Faith and Practice" *Church Record Book*, 3. Dr. John Carpenter and Thomas Wood had questions about closed communion. *Church Record Book*, 5.

²⁷ For example, Elias Stillwell presented a letter from the brethren in Stephentown, NY, the place where Elder Wait Palmer (who baptized Shubal Sterns) labored in the early 1780s according to Sparks, *Roots of Appalachian Christianity*, 43; *Church Record Book*, 4. (Perhaps, Elias Stillwell was licensed to preach at the Stephentown church). Also, on Saturday, February 13, 1796, Elizabeth Beal made covenant with the church having a letter from the church at Newtown, *Church Record Book*, 60.

²⁸ An interesting membership entry in the church record book speaks of an inclusion of people of color. On September 13, 1800, "Black Jim made covenant with the church." It is refreshing to see that race was not a bar to inclusion of the church family, because all mankind is made in the image of God. *Church Record Book*, 84.

and led to baptism and church membership. Then they proceeded as follows: Abraham Waring, Isaiah Dean, Samuel Messenger, Thomas Wood, Enos Spencer, Lydia De Golier, Eleanor Dean, Susanna Brownell, Bethiah Messenger, Mabel Messenger.

All gave a relation of their experience and led to baptism, was to the satisfaction of the brethren and the Elder. The meeting appointed for the next Sabbath at Ebenezer Smith's when the above mentioned persons intended to be baptized. The next Thursday conference meeting to be at brother Elias Stillwell's.²⁹

Thus, the first step—relating one's experience— was the same for both new and charter members. On Friday, after the Thursday conference meeting cited above a lecture was given and some individuals sought baptism. The record book states:

At a lecture preached by Elder Burris Sept 18th AD 1789 at Elias Stillwell's the following persons gave a relation of their experience and led of mind to baptism to the satisfaction of the brethren and intended to be baptized next Sabbath. Viz. John Degolier, Dr. John Carpernter, Martha Stillwell.³⁰

Then Sunday arrived and the record book continued:

Sunday, Sept 20th AD 1789. The Following persons were baptized by Elder Burris: Samuel Messenger, Isaiah Dean, Abraham Waring, Dr. John Carpenter, John Degolier, Thomas Wood, Enos Spencer, Elenor Dean, Lydia Degolier, Susannah Brownwell, Mabel Messenger, Martha Stilwell.

Bethiah Messenger being unwell was necessarily detained from being baptized as was expected³¹

These individuals did not become members upon their baptism, but yet had to be in doctrinal agreement and covenant together with the church as seen in the conference meeting held on the Thursday following their baptism:

At a conference meeting held at Elias Stillwell's, Sept 24th AD 1789, meeting being opened by prayer, proceeded first to enquire of those that were lately baptized if they were desirous of entering into covenant relation. Dr. Carpenter and Thomas Wood said they understood that the brethren held to closed communion and they were tried as to it being right; but, the matter being freely conversed on, they got satisfaction that the relationship of closed communion was right and then proceeded to make solemn covenant with God and the brethren, The following persons – Abraham Waring, Dr. John Carpenter, Thomas Wood, Isaiah Dean, Enos Spencer, Mary Beale, Eleanor Dean, Anne Davis, Mabel Messenger. All made solemn

²⁹ *Church Record Book*, 4.

³⁰ *Church Record Book*, 5

³¹ *Church Record Book*, 5.

covenant and agreed to take the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament for their rule of faith and practice.³²

Regulating Worship

In the How to Practice section of the church records was written, “We believe that the visible church of Christ is a number of His people in mutual agreement voluntarily and understandingly covenanting and embodying together for the carrying on the worship and discipline of God’s house.”³³ Two results of the church covenant are identified here, namely, coming into a church fellowship to maintain the worship and the discipline of the church. It is their covenant duty to see that true worship and church discipline are carried out.

In the Church covenant a pledge was made “by the assistance of God’s divine Spirit to improve all our time, strengths, talents, and advantages for His glory and the good of our fellow men, promising by divine help to walk in our houses with a sincere heart, and to train up those under our care in the ways of Godliness.”³⁴ Such training was given to one’s wife, children, and parents, but also to one’s brothers and sisters in Christ in the larger church family.³⁵ They saw themselves as their brother’s keeper. Part of their responsibility to the brethren was to make sure worship was carried out.

Prayer, singing hymns, preaching, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper are often mentioned, when the topic of worship is addressed in the twenty-first century. Such concerns were the same for the Separate Baptists of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. However, these church record books focus on preaching, the ordinances, and a place to gather. Central to their

³² Please note that the church practiced closed communion; therefore, only members could participate in the Lord’s Supper.

³³ See appendix 3, “How to Practice,” Article 1.

³⁴ See appendix 1, “The Covenant (1789).”

³⁵ This concept in Separate Baptist life viewing the church as a family is displayed by their use of the terms brother and sister.

worship was the preaching of the Word of God, and thus, the need for trained preachers.

Need for ministerial supply. In the absence of a pastor, the preaching could be supplied by lay preachers, though the administering of the ordinance required an ordained minister. Thus, churches without settled ministers had to call in elders from sister churches to help in worship.

There has been much confusion in local histories concerning the early pastors of the Second Baptist Church of Galway up to Joseph Cornell. Elder Burris is often assumed to be a pastor of the church. Nathaniel Sylvester rightly says:

The names of *those who have preached* to this this church [Second Galway] from its organization to the present time, as nearly as one can be ascertained, and in their regular order, are as follows, viz.: Simeon Smith, Burris, Abijah Peck, Joseph Cornell, Finch, Elias Stillwell, John Monroe, [and] Samuel Rogers.³⁶

A later history, which borrows heavily from Sylvester's *History* erroneously assumes that those "who preached" in Second Baptist Church were all pastors of Second Baptist.

Taylor wrote:

Other pastors following Elder Smith are Rev. Burris, Abijah Peck, Joseph Cornell, Jonathan Fitch, Elias Stillwell, John Munroe, Samuel Rogers.³⁷

Elder Simeon Smith was the pastor of First Baptist of Galway. Elder Amos Burris was ordained by Isaac Backus and moved to New York in 1784.³⁸ Abijah Peck became a well-known minister of his day, but he was not ordained until after leaving Galway and starting a church in Clifton Park, NY. Before ordination, Peck did preach in Galway when the church was without a pastor as a lay preacher, though he was not permitted to administer the ordinances. Elder Jonathan Finch was the pastor of Third Baptist Church

³⁶ Nathaniel Bartlett Sylvester. *History of Saratoga County* (1878; repr., Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishers, 1979), 364. Italics mine.

³⁷ W. Bronson Taylor, *Stories and Pictures of Galway: Saratoga County, New York*. (Middle Grove, NY: W. Bronson Taylor, 1966), 18. Italics mine.

³⁸ Isaac Backus. *The Diary of Isaac Backus (1741-1806)*, ed. William G. McLoughlin, 3 vols (Providence, RI: Brown University Press, 1979), 2:1137.

of Galway (later known as First Providence Baptist Church once the town of Providence was formed from Galway).³⁹ He does not appear in the church record book functioning in a pastoral role in Galway Second Baptist until a revival under John Munroe in 1800. Munroe, as a lay preacher at the time, needed an ordained minister to baptize the flood of converts. Not only did Elder Finch come to baptize during that same revival which spread over time, but also Elder Elias Lee from nearby Ballston Spa, and Elder Joseph Craw, the pastor who followed Simeon Smith at First Baptist of Galway.⁴⁰ Elias Stillwell also was not a pastor; he was a lay preacher and member of the Second Baptist Church of Galway. The first church building was built on his land. Elders Smith and Burris are pastors coming in to help Second Galway, which was without a pastor until Elder Joseph Cornell became their first settled minister on May 10, 1794, three years and nine months after it was established as a church! Therefore, some historians, seeing it recorded that a person was preaching or administering baptism in the Second Baptist Church of Galway, wrongly assumed they were pastors of Second Baptist.

Even though Second Galway was without a settled pastor for so long, it was a healthy flourishing church with weekly Sunday worship and preaching, the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's supper (because of pastoral supply), and doctrinal integrity (according to Calvinism). It was missions minded, and experienced growth through believers moving into the area as well as through a significant amount of conversions. Its members also manifested a serious commitment to the Lord, to each other, to the well-being of the church, to other churches around them of like faith, and to the development of ministers. Many pastors and missionaries of note came from Second Baptist Church of Galway. Such vitality came through the means of

³⁹ On Thursday, Oct 21, 1790, the church appointed Abijah Peck, Wait Palmer, Elias Stillwell, and Nathaniel Keeler to attend an ordination next Monday [Oct 24] of Brother Finch to be held at the Third Baptist Church of Galway. All these appointed men were laymen representing Second Baptist. The decision regarding who would go was made by the covenanted membership. *Church Record Book*, 21.

⁴⁰ *Church Record Book*, 82–84.

the church covenant.

Training prospective ministers. Because there was a shortage of ministers, it was incumbent on the churches to seek out gifted men in their membership and encourage them to “exercise their gifts” for the benefit of the whole.⁴¹ In God’s providence, He raised up ministers from the churches themselves. This resulted in the frontier churches, not schools of higher learning, becoming the educational venue to furnish the churches with ministers.

Separate Baptists were skilled at training men for the ministry. They did this by encouraging men to exercise their gifts, and when an elder was present, he would nurture them. Also helpful was active involvement among the men in church decision-making and discipline. Another avenue of training came through lay involvement with neighboring churches in receiving those churches as sister churches, in participating in ordinations, and in the settling of church disputes. Last, being selected as a church messenger to the associational meeting where one would be surrounded by ministers was a rich benefit and a proven learning experience. Within the first ten years of Second Galway’s existence five men were equipped to become pastors.⁴²

The most illustrative example of how ministers were developed is the account of Elisha Andrews, written by his son, the Rev. Erastus Andrews. Elisha had come to Galway as a schoolteacher and was staying with his aunt. After relating his father’s conversion while walking in the woods of Galway, Erastus wrote:

⁴¹ In addition to the church covenant, members were, “commanded to be faithful to improve every gift and talent that is bestowed upon them . . . to the glory of God and the good of his people,” in the “How to Practice” section of the church records. See appendix 3, article 7.

⁴² They were: 1) Abijah Peck (pastor of Clifton Park Baptist Church), 2) Elisha Andrews (known in north central Massachusetts and the New Hampshire region as the Apostle of the Baptists), 3) Elisha’s unnamed cousin, (Mr. M), in the account of Elisha’s life below in Spragues’ *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit*, 4) Elisha Langworthy (founding pastor of Saratoga Springs Baptist Church. Francis Wayland Sr would follow him who was the father of Dr. Francis Wayland Jr, President of Brown), and 5) John Munro (who became the second pastor of Second Galway after Joseph Cornell).

Shortly after his hopeful conversion, he was baptized by Elder Joseph Cornell, and united with the Baptist Church in Galway.

My father now felt an irrepressible desire to warn others of the danger from which he had himself escaped; and he seems very soon to have formed the purpose of devoting himself to the ministry. An incident occurred in connection with his beginning to preach that was somewhat illustrative of the spirit of the times. A strong prejudice existed at that time, among Baptists, against ministerial education; and, as my father was a great lover of books, this was urged as an objection against him, when it was known that he felt called to the work of preaching the Gospel. He had a cousin, (a Mr. M.,) a young man about his own age, who did not love books well enough to incur the displeasure of those even who were the least tolerant of a passion for learning, and who also thought it his duty to preach. A meeting was appointed by the church to hear Mr. M. “improve his gifts,” with a view to his being licensed as a preacher. After the usual introductory exercises, Mr. M. named a text – but that was absolutely as far as he could go – the attempt proved an entire failure. To relieve the church from its momentary embarrassment, one of the Deacons inquired if Brother Andrews would not like to speak to them on that occasion. My father consented to do so, took the text which had proved an overmatch for his cousin, and delivered what turned out to be a very acceptable discourse.

Whereupon, a meeting was appointed the next week for my father to preach; but, on that occasion, he succeeded but little better than his cousin had done before, finding himself obliged to stop before he had finished the introduction of his sermon. M., in his turn, now took the stand, and made a very successful effort. This so balanced the case as to where they began, – in favour of licensing M., and opposed to my father’s becoming a preacher, on the ground that he was bent upon being a student. M. became a minister, was useful in his vocation, and lived to a good old age. My father, about this time left Galway, to visit his parents in Vermont, and on his way called on a minister in Granville, Washington County, who, having heard his story, detained him a few days, and put him to the exercise of his gifts among his people. The result was that, when he was about leaving the place to proceed on his journey, the minister said to him, –“Go, and preach as you go: and I will see your license is forthcoming in due season.”⁴³

In 1785 Joseph Cornell started the Vermont Baptist Association in his barn, and the Granville Church was one of its charter members.⁴⁴ Perhaps, this was the connection with the minister at Granville that put this into motion, for on Sunday, December 4, 1791 the Second Baptist Church of Galway “voted that Brother Elisha Andrews should be recommended by letter as a brother of gifts.”⁴⁵ Thus, he was licensed to preach by the

⁴³ Erastus Andrews, “Elisha Andrews: 1768–1840” in *Annals of the American Baptist Pulpit* ed. William B. Sprague, (1860; Repr., Birmingham. AL: Solid Ground Christian Books, 2005), 1:269–270.

⁴⁴ Terry Wolever, “Joseph Cornell (1747–1826)” in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Regular Baptists in America*, ed. Terry Wolever (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2014), 4:293.

⁴⁵ *Church Record Book*, 35.

church in Galway.⁴⁶

To be able to teach the Word of God, whether as a lay preacher or an ordained minister, was seen as a gift from God in Separate Baptist circles. Therefore, when a meeting was held to hear Mr. M. “improve his gift,” this was a trial run, a first step in seeing if the Lord had called a man to that office. It was not sufficient that a man had an inward call (i.e., a desire) to preach; this also had to be confirmed by the church and no man was to preach who was not first approved by the church to do so.

Thus, it is not surprising to find an example of an individual being reproved who took it upon himself to preach without authorization. In a conference meeting held on Saturday, December 7, 1793 the record states, “Brother Elias Stillwell manifested dissatisfaction with Brother Cleveland for improving his gift abroad without the approbation of the church, and the church appointed Brother Henry Ferris and Nathaniel Keeler to visit Brother [Jacob] Cleveland and cite him to his duty.”⁴⁷ Brother Cleveland did not stay in trouble long, for in the January 11, 1794 covenant meeting, the church appointed a meeting on the following Sunday evening for the improvement of his gift.⁴⁸

In the guidelines, article seven in How to Practice reads:

Seventhly We believe Saints are commanded to be faithful to improve every Gift and Talent that is Bestowed on them in order to which there ought to be such a Gospel freedom that the Church may know where every particular Gift is so that it may be Improved in its proper place and to its right end to the Glory of God and the good of His People and the Church ought to be subject to such Improvement and no one ought to go out of the Church to improve without the Fellowship of the

⁴⁶ There are some difficulties in reconciling the above account by Elisha Andrews’s son, and the 1791 entry in the church record. Cornell was not the pastor of Second Galway until 1794. However, Cornell did preach abroad while pastor of the Baptist church in Manchester, VT (1781–1794). Cornell could have been preaching as supply in any one of the three Baptist churches in Galway at the time of Elisha’s trial of preaching. See Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 277. Elisha Andrews became a member of the Second Baptist Church of Galway on May 13, 1790 (*Church Record Book*, 12). Erastus mentions a godly aunt in Galway. Elisha’s mother’s maiden name was Messenger and one of her brothers was named Samuel. There were many Messengers in Galway and four were charter members of the church (Samuel, Samuel Jr. Mabel, and Bethiah). Perhaps, his cousin, the unnamed Mr. M., was a Messenger. There are many possibilities but no certainties in putting the pieces together.

⁴⁷ *Church Record Book*, 49.

⁴⁸ *Church Record Book*, 50.

Church.⁴⁹

This topic was also discussed in one of the early covenant meetings.

1790, June 3 rd. Met in Conference. Meeting opened by prayer – Then Abijah Peck, James Greenfield, Samuel Messenger, James DeGolier, Isaiah Dean, Enos Spencer, Elisha Andrews, Samuel Messenger, James Jobs, Elias Stillwell, John Lamb, William Otis, John Carpenter, Bethiah Messenger, Avis McMilliam, Lydia DeGolier, Mabel Messenger, Anne Warren, Mary DeGolier, procced to renew covenant with God and with each other & to watch over each other for good.

Then proceeded to talk on the improvement of gifts and agreed that gifts which had not been improved that were tried about this duty should improve firstly before the church – and approbated, then to improve in public – and not without– and no one to be debarred from speaking in case of a specialty.⁵⁰

Prior to the calling of Elder Joseph Cornell (their first pastor), Wait Palmer, Abijah Peck, Elias Stillwell, and John Munro led worship, and thus were licensed to preach. Palmer and Stillwell must have been licensed in their former churches as there was no trial of their gifts before the church recorded in the church record book. Gifted men were licensed by the members of the church, not a presbytery, board of elders, or the pastor. Gifted men were recognized and set apart by their peers. They were farmer preachers, artisan preachers (e.g., blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coopers, tinsmiths, millwrights, weavers), and merchant preachers. They were shepherds and farmers like Amos of the Old Testament, as well as fisherman and tax collectors like the apostles of the New Testament. They were common people called by God.

Holy Spirit-empowered preachers. The Holy Spirit played a central part in their beliefs and practices. To become a member of the church one had to relate one’s experience of the Holy Spirit’s work in one’s life. The Holy Spirit applies the redemption purchased by Christ. The truly saved person is a called person. They looked for effectual calling, that work of the Holy Spirit, whereby the sinner is convicted of his sin and misery, pointed toward Christ, and regenerated to willingly embrace Christ as his Savior

⁴⁹ “How to Practice” in *Church Record Book*. See appendix 3.

⁵⁰ *Church Record Book*, 12 ¼ (the penciled in page number in the records)

and Lord.⁵¹

As they looked to God in salvation, they insisted upon the Holy Spirit's work in calling a man into the ministry and empowering him in preaching. Concerning the Separates' view of "The improvement of spiritual gifts" C. C. Goen wrote:

A fundamental tenet of the Separates was that every converted man not only stood in divine light but had some sort of gift by which he could reflect that light to others. This usually took the form of exhorting, which passed quickly into lay preaching; and those who by trial of their gifts convinced their fellow church members that God had indeed called them to preach could be set apart for the ministry of the Word. If a lay brother evidenced a gift for preaching, the church expected that he would exercise it as a faithful steward. . . . This was in fact, the way most of the Separate churches obtained their pastors.⁵²

Perhaps, one might reason that a Holy Spirit-led preacher, who lacked formal theological training, would preach sermons that lacked depth. Yet, David Benedict, in his, *Fifty Years among the Baptists*, testifies that in the days of these farmer preachers the average person could discuss great doctrinal truths, though the same could not be said fifty years later.⁵³

Francis Wayland (1796–1865), President of Brown University, commented on the ministry of the Word during this time: "I have said that God appoints men to this office and hence it differs materially from any other trade or occupation. . . . and unless he be moved by the Spirit of God he may not undertake it."⁵⁴ Wayland is also expressing what he witnessed first-hand in his youth as his father was the pastor of nearby Saratoga Springs Baptist Church, a sister church of Second Galway from 1811–1846.

⁵¹ The Separate Baptists of the New York frontier embraced a thoroughly Reformed anthropology, hamartiology, and soteriology as reflected in beliefs articulated in the Baptist and Westminster Shorter Catechisms, although they were not confessional in the same sense as the British Baptists and the Regular Baptists of Pennsylvania.

⁵² C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England 1740–1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (1962; repr., Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 174.

⁵³ David Benedict, *Fifty Years Among the Baptist* (1860; repr. San Bernardino, CA: University of Michigan, 2014), 81–82.

⁵⁴ Frances Wayland, *Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel* (Boston: Gould and Lincoln, 1864), 27.

Wayland further advised churches of his day:

In the first place, brethren let me urge you to rely upon yourselves under God, and cease to look abroad for help. . . . Christ does not plant barren vines in his vineyard. When you were constituted a church, he meant that you should increase, having seed within yourselves. . . . The cause is his.⁵⁵

Affirming the value of the covenant meeting to foster spiritual vitality,

Wayland—no doubt reminiscing of an earlier day—wrote,

If you have a covenant meeting once a month, but few attend it, and you are almost strangers to each other. Meet together, then, more frequently, and let your hearts flow together oftener in prayer to God. Encourage every brother to speak for the Saviour, and to call upon sinners to repent and believe. You will soon find that, by exercise, your gifts for public address will improve, and others will take a deeper interest in attending your meetings. Soon, it may be, you will find not one but several brethren who may be useful as licentiates or pastors.

When you see any talent, which promises to be useful, encourage it. Assist your brethren who may give any indications of power in public address, by your prayers and counsel. Strive to build them up for Christ. Aid them in procuring books and enable themselves more and more to the work.⁵⁶

Self-taught preachers. People were readers in those days. Sylvester's *History of Saratoga County* said about the Second Baptist Church of Galway, "For about thirty years past [i.e., 1848–1878] there has been a Sunday-school connected with the church. . . . The school has a library of some two hundred volumes."⁵⁷ The back of books printed in those years often contained a list of subscribers. For example, *The History of Baptism* by Robert Robertson, list Abijah Peck and Joseph Cornell as subscribers from New York.⁵⁸ This book is not light reading but belonged to these two elders who were formerly unschooled lay preachers.

Johnny Truelove says of Elisha Andrews' love for books (from his son's

⁵⁵ Frances Wayland, *Notes on the Principles and Practices of Baptist Churches* (Repr. 1857, Watertown, WI: Baptist Heritage Press, 1988), 233–234.

⁵⁶ Wayland, *Principles and Practices*, 234–235.

⁵⁷ Sylvester, *History of Saratoga County*, 364.

⁵⁸ Robert Robinson, *The History of Baptism*, ed. David Benedict (Boston: Lincoln & Edmands, 1817), 556. Subscribers paid in advance of the printing of the book to obtain their own copy.

account mentioned above):

Such a bibliophile could never have enough books. His love of books was tempered only by a lack of availability and the lack of funds to purchase them. He was known to occasionally stop on a visit to one of his church families and become so engrossed in reading one of their books that he would forget the purpose of his intended visit. Though his parishes were remote, it was not uncommon to find good volumes of theology and sermons or even classical literature in the homes of his families.⁵⁹

This section shows how the church covenant identified the maintenance of church worship as an essential element of church life and the need for men to lead in that worship (through preaching and lifting one's hearts to God in prayer that all might be done through the power of the Holy Spirit). Yet, it was not only the reading of good books but also the fraternity of good examples given by the pastors who settled among them, or assisted from sister churches that helped shape the biblical education of the budding future Elder in their midst.

It has never been sufficient to hear the truth preached; it must always be modeled, since people learn by example. Because many churches did not have pastors, ministers needed to look out for the welfare of not only their own flock, but also sister churches nearby. Inter-church cooperation was the genius of the Separates. This inter-church relationship provided the much-needed pastoral model to pastorless churches.

Working with sister-churches. A significant day in the life of any Separate Baptist Church would be the day they would be recognized as a “a church of Christ in sister relation.”⁶⁰ The Second Baptist Church of Galway was recognized as a sister church by delegates from two churches; 1) Newton (commonly known as East Galway) with Elder Smith and a number of his brethren, and 2) a delegation from the Stillwater

⁵⁹ Johnny Truelove, “Elisha Andrews (1768–1840)” in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Regular Baptists in America*, ed. Terry Wolever. (Springfield, MO: Particular Baptist Press, 2015), 6:483–484.

⁶⁰ *Church Record Book*, 13. It is interesting to note that in the early records the descriptive term “Baptist” is seldom used. They describe themselves here as “a church of Christ.”

Church, under the care of Elder Powers, as well as three other messengers from his church, Samuel Rogers, Joseph Mongav, and Eber Moffet on February 25, 1790.⁶¹ Both Rogers and Moffet would be ordained at that church and candidate to be a pastor for the Second Galway Church in the future before Elder Joseph Cornell was chosen as the first pastor in 1794.⁶² Rogers and Moffet came with Elder Powers not only to represent Stillwater but also to be trained as future leaders. Though Samuel Rogers was not voted in during the first time he candidated, he would become Second Galway's third pastor, and serve from 1808–1813.

Men were also selected in the bi-monthly conference meetings to represent the church in many inter-church meetings. These meetings were frequent. A church might call a council to ordain a minister, solve a dispute, or to recognize a church as a church of Christ in a sister relation and thereby, extend a hand of fellowship to them. Disputes could be doctrinal, giving newly appointed messengers theological ideas to ponder. Those appointed by the church in one conference meeting would report what happened at a subsequent conference meeting. Usually, a few local churches would be called on for the church councils. The place to have one's heart stirred with a greater vision of the church's mission at home and abroad was the yearly associational meeting where all the churches in the association sent messengers. The resulting meeting would be composed of pastors, church leaders, and representatives who, in time, could become pastors and missionaries (i.e., church planters) at home and abroad.

It is interesting to read Wayland's assessment of his day (1860s) in light of the old ways (i.e., the days of his father) in his *Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel*. He

⁶¹ *Church Record Book*, 13.

⁶² For the candidating of Moffett, see *Church Record Book*, 40; for the candidating of Rogers, see *Church Record Book*, 23–27. A call was extended to Rogers from Second Galway, and he accepted but the church was unable to give him a desirable settlement; so, he withdrew from being considered. The whole process took place from Dec. 20, 1790 to Feb. 3, 1791. He would have been Galway's first pastor if he had chosen to settle among them at this time.

compared the differences of the unlettered farmer preacher to the young seminary trained preacher. He wrote of the thunder and lightning of preaching that gripped the heart, which forcefully brought to the mind the issues of life and death, of heaven and hell, of sin and forgiveness of the former days. Such was a true demonstration of the spirit and of power spoken from the heart. It was a definite contrast to the cultured sermons of Wayland's day which were full of flowery literary allusions, tame, and entertaining, spoken by ministers in cathedral-like churches funded by wealthy men, in pleasant upper class neighborhoods such as Brooklyn. These were churches that had the ability to place the preacher's sons in good schools, daughters in good marriages, and provide pastors and their families with study trips abroad to Europe. The preaching during those early years of the Second Baptist Church, although in a coarse frontier setting, was full of life and vitality. Like Ezekiel's vision, it breathed life into men's deadness, and they came alive to God. It was revival time.⁶³

Therefore, the training of prospective ministers was not theoretical classroom instruction, but a hands-on experience that involved active participation in ministry itself. There was not only active learning, such as exercising one's gift by practicing preaching and being involved in the twice monthly conference meeting and inter-church connections, but also passive times of learning in observation of a host of ministers from neighboring churches who supplied the churches without a pastor.

The Second Galway Church had many ministerial examples. In addition to Elder Amos Burris,⁶⁴ there were other supply pastors who ministered in Galway before the first pastor Joseph Cornell came including Elder Simeon Smith (of First Galway),⁶⁵

⁶³ Wayland "Letter III, In What Sense Is the Ministry of the Gospel A Profession?" in *Letters on the Ministry of the Gospel*, 36–60.

⁶⁴ Elder Burris officiated at the first baptisms in the church. *Church Record Book*, 4–5.

⁶⁵ Simeon Smith (1756–1841) Simeon Smith came from Rhode Island along with 27 people, many of whom were his kinsfolk, the original settlers of present-day East Galway (then named Newton). The First Baptist Church of Galway was organized in 1778 with Smith taking the lead of the meetings. In 1787 he was ordained and began to do mission work helping to establish Baptist Churches in Galway

Elder Lemuel Powers (of Stillwater),⁶⁶ Elder Samuel Rogers (of First Saratoga, later called Schuylerville),⁶⁷ Elder Eber Moffitt (of Little Hoosick),⁶⁸ Elder Joshua Morse/Moss (of First Sandisfield, MA),⁶⁹ Peter P. Roots (Itinerant Preacher),⁷⁰ and Elder

(Second Galway) and Providence (Third Galway). He was the pastor of Milton Baptist in 1794 and when Elder Smith was 60 years old, he headed out to Ohio with 70 families and started a church there. Robert Gardner, designates East Galway as “Newton (?)” Robert G. Gardner, *Baptists of Early America: A Statistical History* (Atlanta: Georgia Baptist Historical Society, 1983), 222; Sylvester, *History of Saratoga County*, 362; Taylor, *Stories and Pictures of Galway*, 12–14; Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Baptist Association*, 366, 426. *Church Record Book*, 6–7, 13, 18, 23, 31–33, 38, 45.

⁶⁶ “Lemuel Powers (1756–1800), born in Northbridge, MA, was ordained at the first meeting of the Shaftsbury Association on 11 June 1781, at the request of the Baptist church in Stillwater, NY, which he had helped to form. Under his ministry the Stillwater church became the largest in the association; in 1793 it dismissed 40 members to form another church, and still had 413 members remaining. In 1797 Powers was accused of immorality, and though he denied it, the dispute scattered the church..” Backus, *The Diary of*, 2:1094n6. *Church Record Book*, 7,13.

⁶⁷ Samuel Rogers (1759–1823) came along with Brother Eber Moffitt and Elder Powers of Stillwater Baptist Church when Second Baptist Church was acknowledged as a Church of Christ in sister relation on Feb 25, 1890. He was the first candidate considered to be a pastor of Second Galway. The church extended a call to Elder Rogers and he was agreeable in the winter of 1790–91, but the church could not come up with housing, so the call was withdrawn. He did eventually become Second Galway’s third pastor. He was pastor of First Saratoga, NY (Schuylerville) (1791–1795), Hoosack, NY (1797–1801), Second Galway (1808–1813), and Stillwater (1814–1823). He is one of three pastors with ties to Second Galway (others, Abijah Peck and Joseph Cornell). Rogers’s short biography is located in Section II “Biographical Sketches of a Few Distinguished Ministers of the Body” in Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 341–342. See also Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 366, 407, 445, 455–56. *Church Record Book*, 12–13,15, 23–27, 28.

⁶⁸ “Eber Moffat/Moffit was assistant to Justis Hull, Elder of the Baptist church in Little Hoosick, NY from 1791 to 1798 and was Elder in West Stockbridge, MA from 1799 to 1800. He then ‘went to Connecticut and died there.’”. Backus, *The Diary of*, 3:1388n1. Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 364. *Church Record Book*, 13, 40, 47.

⁶⁹ “Joshua Morse/Moss (1726–1805) was born in South Kingstown, RI. His grandfather served as a Baptist chaplain during Queen Anne’s War, and his father, although not a ‘professing believer,’ was ‘by education a Baptist.’ Morse was converted by George Whitefield at the age of sixteen, and two years later he was licensed to preach and began his career as a Baptist exhorter by arousing the wrath of a mob in Stonington, CT. In 1750 Morse subscribed to a petition at Providence to send a Baptist agent to London to protest that the established ecclesiastical orders in New England frequently violated the Act of Toleration in their treatment of the Baptists. Morse was ordained over an over an open-communion Separate Baptist church in the North Parish (now Montville) of New London, CT, on 17 May 1750 and remained there until 1779, except for two years, 1752–54, probably spent in Fishkill, NY. His church initially practiced open communion, but Morse later adopted anti-pedobaptist views, and at some time before 1767 his church altered its principles and adopted closed communion. In 1771 Morse suggested that a conference of Baptist churches adhering to closed communion be formed. The first meeting took place in Stonington on Oct. 1772. At James Manning’s suggestion, Backus attended the annual meeting of this new organization in New London, in May 1773. In 1781 this organization became known as the Stonington Baptist Association. In 1779 Morse moved to Sandisfield, MA.” Backus, *The Diary of*, 1:69n1. Morse/Moss was also involved in the Shaftsbury Association. In Shaftsbury’s 1782 meeting, Isaac Backus was present and heard Morse “preach an excellent sermon from Heb. 11:24–27.” Backus, *The Diary of*, 2:1092. Also, at this same meeting Morses’s church in Sandisfield, MA was received into the Association. Morse was in the Sandisfield, MA church during the years 1785–1795. Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 17, 365, 440. *Church Record Book*, 35.

⁷⁰ “Peter Philantropos Roots (1765–1828), Dartmouth 1789, was born in Simsbury, CT, where his father, Benajah Roots, was a pastor of the Standing church. In 1773 the family moved to Rutland, VT, where his father was again the Standing minister. Peter Roots was licensed as a Congregational preacher in

Joseph Craw (of First Greenfield).⁷¹ Each of these men could not help but influence the people of Second Galway by their life and labors. The closest minister geographically, and the most involved, was Simeon Smith of First Galway. He would come to break bread with the people and to baptize. He was the pastor next door and split his labors between First Galway and Second Galway but was never called to be Second Galway's pastor.

The settled pastors of Second Galway in the first record book covering 1789–

Mar. 1790, but in 1792 he was baptized by Elder Samuel Stillman in Boston and joined Stillman's church. In the same year he was ordained as an evangelist and soon afterward went to Georgia as a missionary. For seventeen years he itinerated widely in the United States and Canada, sometimes settling briefly in one place (e.g., in Sturbridge, MA, in 1794). He died in Mendon, NY. Roots published *A Letter to the First Congregational Paedo-Baptist Church, at Rutland, in Vermont: to which is added, a Collection of Observations, Hymns, Letters, Etc., taken from the works of Mr. Nathaniel Emmons, Mr. John Wesley, and Others* (Hartford, 1794)." Backus, *The Diary of*, 3:1336n1. A highly informative biographical sketch of Roots is found in Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists* vol. 2 (1871, repr., Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, n.d.) 421–422. Larry Oates wrote "Peter R. Roots was a distinguished Baptist pastor and author who, over the course of eighteen years of mission work, preached in seventeen states and in Canada. He traveled thousands of miles and delivered over two hundred sermons each year. His life was one of great usefulness and activity for the cause of Christ," in "Peter P. Roots (1765–1850)" in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Baptists* ed. Terry Wolever (Springfield, AR: Particular Baptist Press, 2015), 6:319). Oates also wrote in this article that his Peter's father was a pastor who was taught by Joseph Bellamy in preparation to the ministry (page 320), and that Peter P. Roots baptized John Mason Peck (1789–1857) the well-known Baptist home missionary (page 328). Joseph Cornell accompanied Roots on missionary journeys into Canada in the winter of 1803–1804 (page 328). Another fascinating fact Oates brought out is that Peter Roots's great-great grandmother was accused of witchcraft in Salem, but one of the ones acquitted (page 320). *Church Record Book*, 46.

⁷¹ Joseph Craw was pastor of First Greenfield, NY (1793–1797), First Galway (1798–1801), and First Saratoga (1802–1805). He committed suicide in a fit of insanity in 1811. Wright, *History of the Shaftesbury Association*, 361. *Church Record Book*, 48.

1808 were Joseph Cornell,⁷² John Munro,⁷³ and Samuel Rogers.⁷⁴ How did the church covenant relate to pastors? When a congregational vote was cast, their vote had the same value as all male church members. After being called to the church, the pastor joined in the same way, that is, by relating his conversion experience which led to baptism. The pastor had to agree with the articles of faith and enter into solemn covenant with the church by affirming the covenant. His salary, as well as his continuance with them, was reviewed and voted upon by the covenanted members each year. The pastor was accountable to God for his ministry, but the church could call, retain, or dismiss him, and even revoke his credentials.

In summary, the church covenant was used to maintain the life of the church in the admission of new members, in governing pastor-less churches, in regulating the use of itinerant preachers, and in making sure that worship was carried out. Such worship would entail corporate gathering, the preaching of the Word, prayer, and the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Last, the life of the

⁷² Joseph Cornell was pastor during 1794–1798, 1816–1826. Years that the church was without a pastor in the first record book include 1789–1794, 1799–1801, 1804–1807, 1814, a total of 13 years. Wright, *History of the Shaftesbury Association*, 406–407.

⁷³ Dr. John Munro (1759–1804) was the home-grown pastor of Second Baptist Church of Galway from 1802–1803. Wright's biographical sketch of Joseph Cornell, includes this note, "Dr. John Munro, a member of his church, having been ordained to the ministry." Wright, *History of the Shaftesbury Association*, 310 Dr. Munro was an early settler of Galway. When he was twenty-years old he married Mary Osborn in Rehoboth, MA. They had nine children. There are 107 Ancestry family trees of John & Mary Monroe which can be compared with information in the *Church Record Book* such as the date of John's death, his wife Mary, their three sons who were converted in the revival of 1800 (i.e., John Jr, George, and Morris). As an entranceway to this vast source see the Towse Ware Gully Sutar families. <https://www.ancestry.com/family-tree/person/tree/9192347/person/150186245298/facts>. He held political office serving as the second Galway Town Supervisor from 1795–1802. While Supervisor the Town meetings were held for the first time and continuing for a time afterwards in the newly constructed Second Baptist Church meeting house. Sylvester, *History of Saratoga County*, 360. From the church record book, Dr. Munro became a member of the Second Baptist Church in 1792 and five years later, on October 28, 1797, the church voted that brother Munro could exercise his gifts at home or abroad. Brother Munro would often take the lead when the church was without a pastor, and a major revival broke out with many youths coming to Christ while he was a lay preacher at Galway in 1800. On December 3, 1801, he was ordained and became Galway's second pastor; however, his pastorate was short-lived as three years later he died. As a member and pastor, the references to Munro in the *Church Record Book* are too abundant to cite.

⁷⁴ Samuel Rogers was pastor 1808–1813. Wright, *History of the Shaftesbury Association*, 407.

church is maintained through church discipline which safeguards its unity and purity.

Regulating Church Discipline

The local church is an earthly manifestation of the Divine family. The Triune God (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) enjoy mutual love, fellowship, and felicity in an inter-trinitarian, family society. The designation of the first and second persons in the Trinity, Father and Son, portray that divine reality. God's goodness does not remain confined to His being but overflows into His creation and the Christian is made a partaker of this blessedness by becoming a part of God's family. The Scripture speaks of the believer being adopted a son and being received into the family of God as the bride of Christ. These are two different metaphors that illustrate the new relationship a convert has with his heavenly Father.

In the 1790s, individuals did not go to a frontier church to be entertained, for the beauty of the church edifice, the quality of music, or the youth program. There was no youth culture; teens were apprenticed to learn a trade. There were no graded church programs; families worshipped together. There was no instrumental music in worship. How did they view church? They saw it as a family. As previously stated, the family nature of the church can be seen in how they addressed themselves as brothers and sisters. The ministers were called Elders, and the Lord God was addressed as Father. On Sunday, they went to worship God with their church family to which they belonged. It was an orderly society. It was a holy society. It was a loving society, where brothers and sisters in the Lord watched out over each other. Even neighboring churches of the same faith were called sister-churches, and they worked together as an extended family.

His brother's keeper. As previously mentioned, reading the church record books of the covenant meetings of the Separate Baptists was like reading Session minutes (i.e., minutes of the elder board) of a Presbyterian Church. The church covenant placed the duty of watch-care over the flock in the congregational Separate Baptist churches into

the hands of each covenanting member. Each person, not just a board of elders, had the responsibility of being his brother's keeper. This section will discuss how this church covenant duty, commonly called church discipline, was performed.

Church discipline took place in two meetings every month called the conference or covenant meeting. The members were gathered, a prayer was offered up to God, and the first item of business was the reading and affirming of the church covenant. It was like reciting the pledge of allegiance to the American flag at civic gatherings today but instead of pledging loyalty to the United States of America, believers pledged their loyalty to God and to each other. Church-family ties entailed church-family obligations, so it was not uncommon to discuss recent church meetings and interaction with covenanted church members to consider the spiritual well-being of one's brothers and sisters in Christ. If someone were said to be "absenting themselves from God's house," or they were "walking in a disorderly way," two of the brothers would be selected to "cite such a one to his duty." At the next meeting, a report would be given. This was a duty that was taken seriously.

Embarrassed in mind, dark in mind. Two phrases frequently used to describe the response members had toward discipline were "embarrassed in mind" and "dark in mind." An example of the first case was occasioned by domestic trouble in the Lamb household. John Lamb was an active, long-time member and on December 23, 1797 the church voted to send Brother Lamb a letter of "admonition for neglect of duty in his family and endeavoring to support corrupt principles."⁷⁵ On January 27, 1798, a second letter was sent, this time to Sister Lamb. At the next meeting on February 11th an account was given to the church about the letters. It was reported that "Brother Lamb's

⁷⁵ *Church Record Book*, 68.

mind was still embarrassed, and Sister Lamb felt to pursue the case.”⁷⁶ The concept of being embarrassed in mind, here and in other places, conveys the idea that the person confronted hears the message but is confused. The second phrase, “dark in mind,” has the idea of not grasping the charge. Today a person might say that I just do not see what you are talking about. Elias Stillwell, on one occasion, when cited to his duty, responded that “he had nothing against the church but was dark in his own mind.”⁷⁷

Offenses. When an individual joined a church, it was clear that he would be held accountable for the speech and actions of his life. Christians were to walk in the way of holiness, and their behavior would be recorded for all posterity in the church record. Some issues are spoken of so discreetly, that now, hundreds of years later, the nature of the actual offence is unknown. However, from the *Church Record Book*, infrequent attendance, drunkenness, lying, fraudulent business dealings, and conflict among individuals, were proven to be actions worthy of church discipline.

The first documented instance of discipline was for a common infraction. At the Conference meeting held on Thursday, December 24, 1789, the following was recorded, “Brother A[braham] Waring’s seat being empty the brethren appointed Br. Abijah Peck and Br. John Lamb to cite him to his duty.”⁷⁸ Two weeks later, on January 7, 1790 the record states that, “Br. Peck and Br. John Lamb called on to make report respecting Br. Abraham Waring. He appeared willing to confess his fault.”⁷⁹

After absence from the meetings and strife among the brethren, the most common sin was drunkenness. For example, Brother Nathan Davis, who became a member of the church on Thursday, October 22, 1789 made a confession a few months

⁷⁶ *Church Record Book*, 69

⁷⁷ *Church Record Book*, 41.

⁷⁸ *Church Record Book*, 8.

⁷⁹ *Church Record Book*, 8.

later at a conference meeting held on January 7, 1790 that he had been “out of the way in speaking in passion [he lost his temper] to brother fellows.”⁸⁰ Isaiah Dean and James Greenfield were appointed to investigate the matter. At the next covenant meeting, Nathan Davis was present, and he confessed that he had been out of the way with brother fellows. Then, “the brethren manifested a satisfaction,” which means his confession was accepted by the members of the church.⁸¹ However, the very next week at a conference meeting on Thursday, February 11, 1790, there was a report that Brother Davis was “out of the way” again so two men were sent to him.⁸² On the next day, a special conference meeting was held and Brother Davis said he had been out of the way drinking to excess and speaking profanely, but this “did not give satisfaction;” therefore a meeting was to be held in five days.⁸³ This time, the record stated, “Entered into labor with Br. Davis. He confessed his fault. The brethren appeared satisfied, provided he confesses publicly next Sunday.”⁸⁴ Davis must have confessed as the church “gained satisfaction.”⁸⁵ However, Davis, being a drunkard, was over time continually cited to his duty and became more resistant to the discipline. The church had a battle on their hands. Davis would defy the church, submit to the church, then be caught in drunkenness, and the cycle would begin again. A lot of ink was used to record the struggle of a firm church with a defiant rebel. Finally, he was removed from membership.

Another example of disciplining drunkenness is seen in the story of Brother Abraham Warring. He would struggle with alcohol, readily confess his sin, and beg

⁸⁰ *Church Record Book*, 8.

⁸¹ *Church Record Book*, 9.

⁸² *Church Record Book*, 9.

⁸³ *Church Record Book*, 9.

⁸⁴ *Church Record Book*, 9.

⁸⁵ *Church Record Book*, 10.

forbearance, as he was trying to overcome his sin. After much patient labor with him, the church had to regrettably dismiss him from membership as his life did not match his profession.

Responses. How was dismissal handled? Consider the case of Brother Davis in the record of the conference meeting held on Thursday, July 22, 1790:

Enquired of Br. Davis how he was in his mind respecting the charges laid against him—finding him obstinate, and denying the fact, the church was again asked if they were at an end of labor with Br. Davis. They answered they were. Br. Thomas Stillwell reported that he had labored with Br. Davis to no purpose and was now fully at an end of labor with Br. Davis

The church then withdrew the hand of fellowship from Br. Nathan Davis and voted that a letter be wrote to Br. Davis informing him of our proceedings and the response of our withdrawing from him.

According to appointment a letter was written to Br. Davis, brought to him, and a copy of it has since been read before the congregation on the Sabbath Day [July 25, 1790].⁸⁶

Thus, there was firm but patient oversight. Wrongdoing was to be repented of to the satisfaction of all, but once a decision to remove an impenitent member from the church, it took place swiftly, with a notice in writing to the offender and with a reading of the dismissal letter at public worship on the following Lord's day.

Yet, stories did not always conclude this way. For example, on Thursday May 13, 1790, at a conference meeting in which the future renown Baptist minister Elisha Andrews became a member, a dispute was brought forward between two brothers in Christ. Thomas Stillwell had gone to Troy and picked up some items for James Jobs. Jobs accused Stillwell of keeping some of Jobs's property for himself and had a letter from Troy, NY to prove it. Stillwell denied everything. Therefore, three men, who were selected to represent the church at the Shaftsbury Association meeting during the first week in June in Adams, MA, were authorized by the church to stop on the way to the

⁸⁶ *Church Record Book*, 16.

meeting to investigate the matter in Troy. Once back at the June 10th conference meeting, the church asked Brother Stillwell the state of his mind upon the matter, and he said that he wished “to take everything out of the way as soon as possible.”⁸⁷ At the next meeting on Thursday, June 17th conference meeting, the record stated that Stillwell had neglected his duty, so they wrote him a letter. The following Wednesday, June 23, Brother Rogers preached at the schoolhouse in Galway and after attending the meeting, Brother Thomas Stillwell confessed that he had wronged Brother Jobs. The record states that Stillwell confessed, saying that he “had deceived him and had lied to cover the matter – confessed it was true what was said against him at Troy. He wished to be forgiven, promised to make restitution to Br. Jobs.”⁸⁸ Thomas Stillwell, being restored into a good standing in the church, would be consequently called upon to lovingly cite a wayward brother to his duty, namely, poor Abraham Warring, who struggled to overcome his addiction to alcohol.

Grace. These men were tough, saw the horrors of war, and carved out a place for their homes and farms from a virgin forest. They needed each other in war, in settling in the rugged wilderness, and in their walk with God. Unlike today, community was paramount in their thinking. If they were to survive, they needed the help of others and especially the help of God. If this kind of discipline seems too intrusive to the modern mind, it must be remembered they saw themselves as part of a band of brothers that demanded loyalty to God and each other, and every offense was to be dealt with privately before it was allowed to come to the church. For them church discipline done correctly was a means of grace.

⁸⁷ *Church Record Book*, 12 1/2

⁸⁸ *Church Record Book*, 12 1/2.

CHAPTER 5

THE BENEFITS OF USING A CHURCH COVENANT

What benefits did the Separate Baptists of the New York frontier at the beginning of the American republic acquire by structuring church life around the church covenant?

The Successful Planting of Healthy Churches

After the Revolutionary War, church growth was exponential in New York State. It multiplied so fast that there were not enough ministers to service every church. But that did not prove to be abortive. Many churches in the Northeast that were started this time, during the Second Great Awakening, are still open and functioning.¹ Quite a few are in rural settings even to this day. They do not have large congregations but still maintain a presence for Christ and a gospel witness. It is astounding that they flourished since many churches were without a pastor, or even a deacon at their inception. There was a flood of Baptists that came to the New York frontier from New England churches,

¹ Charles Wesley Brooks comments on churches only in New York State that were part of the Shaftsbury Association before 1800, a body that also included churches in Vermont and Massachusetts: “According to Benedict, two churches, located at the time in the State of New York, the Botskill, 1765, and the White Creek, 1799, were members of the Association. Other New York churches which joined before 1800 were Austerlitz, 1779; Ballston Spa, 1791; Berlin, 1783; Broadalbin, 1792; Canaan, 1793; Chatham, 1795; Clifton Park, 1795; Chester, 1786; First Dover, 1757; First Galway, 1778; Second Galway, 1790; First Greenfield, 1791; Second Greenfield, 1794; Third Greenfield, 1795; Hartford, 1788; Second Hartford, 1795; West Hillsdale, 1787; East Hillsdale, 1792; Hoosick, 1785; Kingsboro, 1797; Milton, 1793; Moreau, 1795; Pittstown, 1784; Providence, 1791; Second Providence, 1794; Salem, 1790; Saratoga Springs, 1793; Schuylerville, 1790; Schodack, 1780; Stephentown, 1796; Stillwater, 1780; Troy, 1794; and Franklin, 1793. This Association at one time was a large body. Fifty churches located in this State, were at one time or another members of it.” There were even more Baptist associations in New York of like faith with their own member churches! The Baptist presence in New York increased tremendously. Charles Wesley Brooks, *A Century of Missions in the Empire State as Exhibited by the Work and the Growth of the Baptist Missionary Convention of the State of New York* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1900), 30.

seeking to start churches in their new settlements, and they brought their church covenants and articles of faith with them. In the 1740s they had already learned how to organize a church, having come from Congregationalism, and starting New Light (i.e., Separate) Congregational churches. The First Great Awakening also spawned itinerant and lay preachers. The model was already in place.

The Fostering of Every Member Church Involvement

The genius of the use of the church covenant was that it mobilized the laity. One could not sit by and be a spectator but would be called upon to build up the church, just as Nehemiah inspired the returning Jews to take up their sword and trowel to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. What an apt metaphor is the sword and trowel! There was a need to pick up the trowel because there was a task to be done, and everyone was needed to pitch in. The sword was to be lifted, as it represented the truth, the truth about Jesus that needed to be proclaimed. The labor of evangelism and missions burned in every heart, and the fire was spread in new church plants both at home and abroad.

The Successful Training of Ministers in a Church Context

It was not until 1808 that the first divinity school was established with the sole purpose of training ministers at Andover Divinity School. Before that, in New England, ministers would be trained through an internship with a settled minister after formal classical training. On the frontier, unschooled ministers were the norm, and internship was rare. Instead, church members looked among the men the Lord had brought into their church family. Was a gifted man among them, whose gifts needed to be exercised? The shepherding aspect of the ministerial office was easily learned through congregational participation in the watch care over the flock. Administrative qualities were developed through the act of leading men and families by chairing conference meetings. Men who thought they might be called could have a trial of their preaching gifts to see if others

were of the same mind. The church could confirm a man's calling as a preacher by licensing him to preach or calling an ordination council of ministers and lay leaders of sister churches to verify his calling and set him apart as an elder. Once a church had a settled pastor, a prospective minister would often accompany the elder to conferences called by sister churches, or to association meetings, thereby giving the prospective minister a chance to be around other ministers. As was the case of Jesus and His disciples, ministry training was a hands-on experience, an apprenticeship with a mentor.

In the selection of ministers in those early frontier days, being filled with the Spirit was more important than being learned. However, many men that lacked formal education had an unquenchable desire to learn. Being self-taught, they were avid readers. Joseph Cornell, the Second Baptist Church of Galway's first pastor, was the quintessential example of the farmer-preacher, whose zeal for preaching the gospel drove him to study. Stephen Wright's *The History of the Shaftesbury Association* includes Cornell in a chapter titled, "Biographical Sketches of a Few Distinguished Ministers of the Body" along with twenty other ministers (three of the twenty one had ties to Second Baptist, Galway). A selection from this brief four-page account reads:

Almost immediately after his connection with the people of God, his mind was deeply exercised with a sense of his duty in reference to the ministry. On the one hand he felt almost irresistibly impelled to commence preaching the gospel for the salvation of sinners; and on the other, he felt weighted down with a sense of his insufficiency, especially in reference to the education necessary to qualify him "rightly to divide the word, and give to each his portion in due season."²

This is how Cornell felt when he was 21 years old. He would not be ordained as an Elder until twelve years later in 1780. The next 46 years until his death in Galway in 1826, he displayed abundant energy for Christ, helping three churches to get off the ground: Manchester, Vermont; Second Galway, NY; and Providence, RI. He served as a missionary for three years planting churches in Western New York and Canada, and in

² Stephen Wright. *History of the Shaftesbury Association, From 1789 to 1853* (Troy, NY: A.G. Johnson, Steam Press Printer, Cannon Place, 1853), 309.

the final years of his life, he served as a missionary to churches in Columbia County, NY. He loved itinerant preaching. He was a leader in associational life, helping to establish the Shaftsbury Association (1780), Vermont Association (1785), and the Ostego Baptist Association (1795).

A piece about Cornell emphasizes the self-taught ministers's desire for further education:

But there are other considerations which render his memory peculiarly interesting. He was wholly self-taught. So illiterate, indeed, was he, at the time he commenced in the ministry, that it was difficult for him to read a sentence intelligibly. Notwithstanding this, his language was generally well-selected, his arrangements systematic, and his illustrations clear and lucid. He possessed a strong mind a discriminating judgment, which enabled him to steer clear of many of the troubles and difficulties which frequently disturb the placidity of the pastoral office. He seemed to be thoroughly acquainted with the avenues to the human heart, which enabled him frequently, in the course of his preaching, to make the most deep and lasting impressions, with the most familiar language and the most unlabored argument.

In a word, his entire devotion, fervent piety, and unremitting zeal, were apparent at all times in his daily walk and conversation, and secured to him the confidence of the Christian community. Unlike many of his age and circumstances, in reference to literary acquirements, he was a warm and decided friend of education, and of those institutions,—especially that at Hamilton,—which have in view the education of persons for the ministry. The writer of this article recollects perfectly well being present at a ministerial conference nearly twenty years ago, when Eld. Cornell was also present, and warmly espoused the cause of education; rendering, as one reason for his so doing, his own experience for the want of it, and the privation and embarrassment he had suffered as a consequence.³

Cornell served as Moderator of the Board of Trustees at the Hamilton Theological and Literary Institution in 1823.⁴ A graduate of Hamilton, Eugenio Kincaid, was the fourth pastor of Second Galway during the close of Cornell's life. Kincaid would leave Galway and eventually travel to Burma to work with Adoniram Judson.

A book celebrating the first fifty years of Hamilton—which became Madison

³ Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 311–12. Cornell became an able writer. Samples of his writing can be found in Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association*, 62, 158.

⁴ B.F. Bronson, J.D. Cole, W.H. Shailer, A.M. BeeBee, and N.L. Andrews, eds. *The First Half Century of Madison University, (1819–1869) or The Jubilee Volume, Containing Sketches of Elven Hundred Living and Deceased Alumni; with Portraits of Founders, Presidents, and Patrons. Also, the Exercises of the Semi-centennial Anniversary* (New York: Sheldon & Co., 1872), 405.

University, contains a comparison between what conditions were like at its founding in 1819 (i.e., then), and what the conditions were like in 1869 (i.e., now):⁵

Then the Baptist denomination in this State [New York] numbered twenty-eight thousand members with three hundred churches and two-hundred and thirty ministers; *now* over one hundred thousand members, with between eight and nine hundred churches and one thousand ministers, pastors, and otherwise. *Then* there were but three liberally educated Baptist ministers west of the Hudson river; *now* taking all the “West,” they may be counted by the thousand.⁶

Before 1819, there were only three ministers with formal education west of the Hudson River in New York State. Galway is west of the Hudson River. After Kincaid’s overseas service in Burma, he came home to start Lewisburg University, which in time would become Bucknell University. University-trained ministers would be the future for the Second Baptist Church of Galway. However, that would turn a page in the history of the church beyond the scope of this treatise. Future studies could examine this further.

The Fostering of Sister Church Relations and Associational Life

Absolutely necessary for the well-being of the many fledgling and often pastorless churches on the frontier was the inter-church relationships both locally and regionally through sister churches and associational life. The Second Baptist Church of Galway joined the Shaftsbury Association in 1801 and withdrew to form the Saratoga Association, birthed from Shaftsbury in 1809, as a more local expression. Pastors were supplied for churches without an elder to administer Baptism and the Lord’s Supper, ordinations were undertaken, wayward churches were censured, and new churches were planted. Not only did contact with sister-churches aid the churches in their everyday life, but it helped in the training of ministers by providing exposure with elders from other

⁵ There have been several name changes with the school in Hamilton, NY. It was initially called the Baptist Education Society of the State of New York (1819–1823), then Hamilton Theological and Literary Institution (1823–1846), Madison University (1846–1890), and now Colgate University (1890 to the present).

⁶ Bronson, *First Half Century of Madison University*, 25.

churches. Today, many think in terms of a national association but individuals at that time focused more on local associations.

The Fostering of Evangelism

Jesus said that Christians are to go into all the world and preach the Gospel (Matthew 28:18–20; Mark 16:15). Among the Separate Baptists, evangelical Calvinism can be seen at its best! The early Separate Baptists of the New York frontier provide living proof that to embrace Calvinism does not necessarily deaden one's heart for evangelism. They went everywhere preaching the Gospel, and churches began to appear wherever they went, evidencing conversion growth. Believing in the sovereignty of God gave the missionaries and pastors staying power. It was accompanied with a heavenward look, seeking God's blessing as they sowed the Gospel seed.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

As this thesis draws to a close, it revisits Abijah Peck, in whose weaving shop early residents in the settlement of New Galloway—who left their former Baptist churches to carve out a life for themselves in the New York frontier—became acquainted. The brethren looked to Abijah for leadership in the pastorless church that came into being. He was chosen as its first deacon, was a lay preacher who led the services, and was considered as a candidate to be the Second Baptist Church’s first pastor just prior to the call that was extended to Joseph Cornell. Although, after consideration, the call was not extended to Brother Peck, he helped Elder Cornell get settled in as the pastor. Not long after, Peck moved to Clifton Park, NY with his family and helped bring a church into existence in his house in 1794. He was called to pastor that church, being ordained on March 12, 1801. Until his ordination, Peck preached weekly at the Clifton Park Baptist Church. The relationship was so healthy between the sister churches of Galway and Clifton Park that when Elder Cornell came to administer baptism or the Lord’s Supper in Clifton Park, Peck would supply the pulpit in Galway as a lay preacher.¹ Abijah Peck led the Clifton Park Baptist Church for 54 years, forty-seven years of those years as its pastor. He was a prominent minister in the State of New York. While at Clifton Park, he also helped start five churches in Schenectady, Burnt Hills, First Half Moon, Second Half

¹ J. W. Crumb, *The Old Paths: or a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of the Clifton Park Baptist Church being a Discourse Delivered at the Celebration of the Fifty-eighth Year of Said Church, Held Feb. 25, 1853* (Utica, NY: D. Bennett, 1853), 5–9. In the Galway Church record book, it mentions that John Munro, James Jobs, and Asa Cornell was appointed to attend Peck’s ordination at Clifton Park. *Church Record Book*, 86. Elder Cornell left Second Baptist Church in 1798 to take up itinerant preaching and missions work and therefore was not present at Peck’s ordination.

Moon, and Scotia.²

What is remarkable about the church growth of this time was that hundreds of churches were coming into existence in a short time, and they were all Separate Baptist churches of like faith, having the same doctrine, missionary vision, and making use of the church covenant. The countryside was blanketed with Baptist churches, like a spring lawn overgrown with yellow dandelions. Baptist churches were everywhere. Imagine what it would be like to be surrounded by twenty to thirty Baptist churches in your region with each one being of like faith! New York State, in those days, was a Baptist haven in America.

A few years ago, the author of this thesis placed an order on Particular Baptist Press's website for the then eleven volumes of *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Regular Baptists in America* edited by Terry Wolever. Soon after the order was placed the phone rang. It was Terry Wolever. The first thing he said was, "What is it like to be the pastor of such an historic church?" We then talked for a couple of hours. He had a special passion for the churches in New York and Pennsylvania. We both agreed that the history of the Separate Baptists on the New York frontier is an exceedingly rich treasure that has been overlooked in contemporary Baptist history studies. Hopefully, this thesis will produce the same effect as the January 28, 1848 discovery of gold at Sutter's Mill in California that resulted in the gold rush, which helped to spur the settlement of the American West. There is an abundance of "Baptist gold" awaiting scholarly discovery in the settlement of the New York frontier in the early years of the United States of America. Perhaps, this thesis will draw attention to the treasures to be mined.

² Stephen Wright, *History of the Shaftsbury Association, From 1789 to 1853* (Troy, NY: A.G. Johnson, Steam Press Printer, Cannon Place, 1853), 339. Abijah Peck's portrait hangs in the entranceway of the current Bible Baptist Church of Galway. It is a color photograph of an original oil painting placed on canvas that hung in Peck's Clifton Park Baptist Church, which is now called Clifton Park Center Baptist Church. He was buried in that church's graveyard.

Here is one last story that ties Abijah Peck and the use of the church covenant. Abijah Peck came to Christ serving as a soldier in the Revolutionary War. The instrument that God used in Peck's conversion was a Chaplin, Elder Elkanah Holmes (1743–1832).³ Elder Holmes became a missionary under the New York Missionary Society to the Seneca and Tuscarora Indians on their reservations after the war. Holmes was a Baptist, but he was sent out by a mission board that was composed of both Baptists and Presbyterians. The original church, on the Tuscarora reservation, under Holmes was started in 1805, and many Baptist ministers from the Shaftesbury Association came and preached to the Indians in these two tribes when Holmes was there, including Joseph Cornell from Second Baptist, Galway, and Lemuel Covell from Third Baptist, Galway.

A dispute arose between representatives of these two denominations on the board of the New York Missionary Society as to what kind of church they wanted to start. The Baptists pulled out and started the New York Baptist Missionary Society in 1806. As a result, Elkanah stepped aside, and the board sent a Presbyterian minister to the Indians. Holmes' church became a Congregational church.⁴ However, thirty years later, James Cusick, the son of Holmes's interpreter, became a Baptist, and started the Tuscarora Baptist Church in 1836. Like Second Baptist Church of Galway, the life of this church was built around the church covenant and it thrived, developing its own leadership from the Indian membership. They participated in associational life with non-Indians, and by 1975–1976 it had a weekly attendance of around 200. How does the author know this? He also preached at that church, being originally ordained by his home church to minister to Indian youth at the Tonawanda (Seneca Indian) and Tuscarora Indian reservations in western New York. As his labors there occurred in his early years of ministry, he was

³ Wright, *History of the Shaftesbury Association*, 339.

⁴ This would be consistent with the Plan of Union (1801) among the Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

unaware of any connection between Second Baptist Church of Galway, his later field of labor, and the Tuscarora Baptist Church on the reservation. He did not know that the Galway churches sent pastors as missionaries to the same Indian tribes in the early 1800s. That both churches have continued to this day, speaks of the power of God, who blessed these two churches that were established and strengthened by using a church covenant.⁵

The churches started on the New York frontier were God-honoring, biblical, missions-minded, concerned with living holy, Spirit-filled lives, and they were extremely effective. God watered a seed in Galway among the New England transplants that grew and blossomed to His glory. There is more to be discovered about God's work, His story, here in New York State that cannot help but encourage, inspire, and motivate pastors and the children of God wherever they are.

⁵ Sources for Elkanah Holmes, Lemuel Covell, and the Tuscarora Baptist Church, from earliest date to most recent are: Deidamia Brown, *Memoir of the Late Rev. Lemuel Covell, Missionary to the Tuscarora Indians and the Upper Province of Upper Canada* (1839; repr., Lexington, KY: Forgotten Books, 2012); S. F. Smith, ed. "Aboriginal Missions in North America," in *The Christian Review* vol 12 (1847), 253–274; Stuart Ivinson and Fred Rosser, *The Baptists in Upper and Lower Canada before 1820* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1956); Anthony F. C. Wallace, *Tuscarora: A History* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2012), 87–89, 93–103; Terry Wolever, "Elkanah Holmes (1743–1832) in *A Noble Company: Biographical Essays on Notable Particular-Baptists* ed. Terry Wolever, (Springfield, AR: Particular Baptist Press, 2014), 4:113–162; Priest, "Lemuel Covell" in *A Noble Company*, 6:203–243; "The Congregational Church in the Tuscarora Reservation," Access Genealogy, accessed October 13, 2020, <https://accessgenealogy.com/new-york/the-congregational-church-in-the-tuscarora-reseveration.html>.

APPENDIX 1

CHURCH COVENANTS OF THE SECOND BAPTIST CHURCH

Two covenants will be displayed in this appendix: the 1789 Covenant and the present-day covenant of the same church, renamed Bible Baptist Church of Galway.

The Covenant (1789)

We do now in the Presence of the Great allseeing and most Glorious God and before Angels and men give up ourselves to the Lord Jehovah Father Son and Holy Ghost and avo[w] him this day to be our God and Father, our Saviour and Leader and Receive him as our portion forever we give up our selves unto the Lord Jesus Christ to adhere to him as the head of his People in the Covenant of Grace and rely on him as our Prophet Priest and King to bring us to Eternal Blefsedness We acknowledge it our Everlasting and indispensable obligation to Glorify our God by living a Holy religious and Godly life in this present world in all our several places and relations and we do engage by the afsistance of Gods divine Spirit to improve all our time strength talents and advantages for his Glory and the Good of our Fellowmen promising by Divine help to walk in our houses with A sincere Heart and to train up those under our care in the ways of Godlinefs and we also give up ourselves to one another in Covenant promising to act toward each other in the Love of God and to watch not only against those evils which are reckoned gross but also against all foolish talking and jesting which is not convenient and vain disputing about words and things which gender strife and against disregarding promises and not fulfilling engagements talking and backbiting spending time Idly at taverns or elsewhere and vain unnecefsary worldly conversation on the Lords Day and whatsoever evil that is contrary to sound Doctrine according to the Scriptures promising by God's help to hold communion together in the fellowship of God and in the ordinances and disappline of his House according as we are or shall be guided by the Spirit of God in his word expecting that he will yet further and more Gloriously open his word and the misteries of his Kingdom flying to the blood of the Everlasting Covenant for the Pardon of our many errors and Praying that the Lord would prepare and strengthen us for every good word and work to do his will working in us that is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ to whom be Glory forever and ever Amen.¹

¹*Church Record Book of the Second Baptist Church, 1789–1808*, n.p. Spelling and punctuation have been retained. The author of the Second Baptist Church of Galway covenant is Isaac Backus; compare Backus's church covenant in Hovey's biography of Backus Alvah Hovey, *A Memoir of the Life and Times of Rev. Isaac Backus* (1858; repr., Harrisonburg, VA: Gano Books, 1991), 338–339.

Church Covenant of the Bible Baptist Church of Galway (present day)

With God and each other as our witnesses, we do sincerely resolve to walk in obedience to God in the newness of life that He has given us. We desire to live out what our baptism so clearly portrayed. We acknowledge that we were made right with God not by what we have done, but by what Christ has done for us. Jesus died for our sins and through His death, burial, and resurrection, we have been forgiven and reconciled to God by grace through faith. He has given unto us new life, as evidenced in a heart to believe and a desire to walk in His ways.

Therefore, being dead as to our former way of life and now alive to God, we enter into this covenant with our Lord, and our brothers and sisters in Christ who are members of the Bible Baptist Church of Galway to encourage and hold each other accountable to the vows made this day.²

We resolve to live according to the standards that God has given in His Word, the Bible.

- We promise, by the Holy Spirit's help, to put the Lord first in our lives, to read and meditate upon His Word, to allow Him to search our hearts to root out any wickedness, to faithfully attend the public worship of the church, to cast our cares upon Him in prayer, and to seek His direction as we purposely endeavor to live for Him.

- We promise not to compromise the truths revealed to us by God in the Bible, but to adhere to the faith once delivered to the saints. With God's help, we resolve to be students of the Bible and hold fast to the essentials that are clear to all, and to be gracious with respect to those who sincerely disagree on non-essentials not clearly made known.

² The Second Baptist, Galway has been called by different names throughout its 230-year history. It was called the Galway Baptist Church, after First Baptist, Galway closed its doors—and the boundary lines changed between townships. Third and Fourth Baptist churches of Galway became identified with Providence, the newly given name of the township that was formed from Galway. The name, Bible Baptist Church, came as a result of a compromise by a pastor who was a graduate of Moody Bible College, who sought to change the name to the Galway Bible Church. At the objection of a staunch Baptist, the present name was set forth and accepted. Though different names were used over time, it was the same body of believers.

- We promise to walk together with each other in brotherly love. Seeking God's help, we will be mindful of each other's spiritual and temporal welfare and exercise Christian watchfulness over each other, entering into their joys and sorrows, offering encouragement or correction, if needed, with all kindness and compassion. As a church, we are a family that ought to be loyal to and desires the best for each other.
- We promise, in all our relationships, whether as spouses, parents, children, employers, or employees, that we will do our duty as unto the Lord. We will endeavor to live in integrity, industry, and humility, seeking the welfare of others under or over us, mindful of the fact the world will judge the reality of our faith not only by what we say, but by how we live.
- We promise to contribute our time, money, and talents to advance the kingdom through our local church. We desire to make the Gospel known. We will seek to discover what part God has for us in the church, the body of Christ. We will pray for her ministry of outreach to alleviate both spiritual and temporal need.
- We promise to be morally pure in this sensual world, acknowledging that sexual activity is designed for, and restricted to, the marriage of a man and a woman.
- We promise to seek justice for the oppressed, to come to the aid of those sexually, emotionally, or physically abused, and to expose and bring to justice any abuser in our midst. We will not tolerate the hypocrite who uses a show of godliness to hide an evil heart.
- We promise that we will do all we can to keep the unity and peace of the church. We will pray for its peace and its witness to a watching world. If, in God's providence, we remove from this place, we will as soon as possible unite with some other church, where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant, and the principles of God's Word. Lastly, if we ever can no longer affirm this covenant, we will notify the Elders of this church of our change in sentiment and withdraw in a peaceful manner.

Adopted by the congregation on October 9, 2016

Written by Wayne R. Brandow

APPENDIX 2
ARTICLES OF FAITH

Table A1. Articles of Faith of the Second Baptist Church of Galway¹

<p>First We believe there is one only living and true God who is Eternal In his being and that they are three in office in the Godhead the Father the Son and the Holy Ghost Who are equal in essence power and Glory and altho three in office yet but one in essence the Son is Eternal in his being existence Equal with the Father and the Holy Ghost is Eternal proceeding from the Father and the Son and these three are one ever living and Eternal God</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TRINITY</p> <p>Triune God</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One God, three in office? (error –modalism, see below) • Equal & one in essence • Son eternal (preexistent) • Holy Spirit eternal, proceeding from Father & Son
<p>Secondly We believe that the Scriptures of the old and new Testaments were Written by Divine Inspiration of the Spirit of God and being so written are the only perfect rule of Faith and Practice</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • OT & NT Divinely inspired • Only perfect rule of faith & practice
<p>Thly We believe that God Created our first Parents upright yet they did not long abide But did Willfully transgreffs the law of God their Creator In Eating the forbidden fruit By their sinful Rebellion They fell from their Original Righteousness and Communion with God and we all in them become Dead in Sin and Entirely depraved, They being the Root and by Godly appointment Standing In the Stead of all Mankind their Corrupt Nature was conveyed to all their Posterity so that we are all by Nature Children of Wrath the Servants of Sin Subjects of Death and all other miseries Spiritual Temporal and Eternal and by this original depravity we are wholly Indisposed and opposed to all good and Wholly Inclined to all Evil</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5 POINTS OF CALVINISM (TULIP)</p> <p>T- TOTAL DEPRAVITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adam & Eve created upright, did willfully transgress the law, fell • They lost original righteousness and communion with God <p>Their corrupt nature passed down to all mankind</p>

¹ *Church Record Book of the Second Baptist Church, 1789–1808*, n.p. Spelling and punctuation have been retained

Table A1 continued

<p>Fouly We believe that before the world began God did choose that A number of mankind should be brought unto Everlasting Salvation and that in performance of his Glorious defign he did make a covenant of Grace and Peace with his Son Jesus Christ wherein the Lord Jesus Christ was appointed A Saviour and all spiritual blefsings for them in him as also that their persons with all their Graces are in the hands of Christ and made his care and charge and in pursuance of this Wonderful defign being accomplished by the Lord Jesus Christ is lifted up as the Saviour of all that believe on him and he has sent forth his ministering Servants to preach the Gospel to all the World every creature with this Declaration he believes and is Baptized shall be saved and he that believeth not shall be Damned</p>	<p>U-UNCONDITIONAL ELECTION</p> <p>God chose the elect to salvation</p> <p>THE COVENANT OF GRACE</p> <p>Covenant made with Christ on our behalf.</p> <p>All who believe and are baptized will be saved, he that believes not will be damned</p>
<p>Fifthly We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ being set up from Everlasting as the Mediator of the New Covenant did engage to be the surety of his people and did in the fullnefs of time really afsume Human Nature in which Nature he did suffer and die as their substitute in their room and stead whereby he made all that satisfaction for their sins which the Law and Justice of God could require</p>	<p>L- LIMITED ATONEMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christ the mediator of a new covenant for <i>his people</i> • <i>He died in his people's place, paying the debt for their sins</i>
<p>Sixthly We believe that the justification of Gods Children or believers is only by the Righteousnefs of Christ Imputed to them without the consideration of any works of Righteousnefs done by them and that the full and free pardon of all their sins and transgreffions past present and to come is only through the Blood of Christ according to the Riches of His Grace</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Justified by the righteousness of Christ • Clothed in the imputed righteousness of Christ • Forgiveness of sins
<p>Seventhly We believe that the Holy Spirit proceeding from the Father and the Son and he only doth and can make a particular application of the Atonement by Christ to every particular believer as it is revealed in the word of God</p>	<p>I- IRRESISTABLE GRACE</p> <p>The Holy Spirit applies salvation to every <i>particular</i> believer</p>
<p>Eighthly We believe that all those that are Chosen by the Father redeemed by the Son and sanctified by the Spirit shall continually and finally persevere to the end so that not one of them ever perish but shall have Eternal life.</p>	<p>P-PERSERVERANCE OF THE FAITH</p> <p>Those chosen, redeemed, and set apart will persevere and not perish</p>

Table A1 continued

<p>Ninthly We believe that assurance of Faith is attainable in this Life and that it is a Duty highly incumbent for Believers to Labor after tho, by no means do we look upon Assurance to be the essence of Faith but one of the delightful Effects thereof</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ASSURANCE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Assurance of salvation is attainable in life</p>
<p>Tenthly We believe that the life of Religion consists In the knowledge of God and conformity to him in the inward man which necessarily produceth an External conformity to his Law</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">TRUE RELIGION</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To know God – conformity to Him inwardly which yields external conformity (faith leads to obedience)</p>
<p>Eleventhly We believe that true believers being united to Christ by Faith have communion with God and by his spirit are united to each other and have communion one with another whereby they are made partakers of each others Gifts and Graces</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">WE ARE GIFTED</p> <p style="text-align: center;">To have communion with God and others and to share in His gifts and graces to be used to serve others</p>
<p>Twelvly We believe there will be a general Resurrection both of the Just and unjust and God hath Appointed a day in which he Judge the world in Righteousness by Jesus Christ and will reward every man according to his works When the Wicked shall be sent into Everlasting Punishment and the Righteous into Life Eternal</p> <p>The End of Faith</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">JUDGMENT DAY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">General resurrection of the wicked to punishment and the just to life</p>

About This Statement of Faith

A standard confession such as the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith was not used in the Galway church. Each Congregationalist church in Puritan New England had its own confession of faith. However, there was a general theological framework common to all. Theology was often conveyed as a body of divinity and that body reflected the Westminster Shorter Catechism’s explication of the covenant of grace. It starts with the Scriptures, God’s revelation of Himself as to His Person, His works (creation and providence), the special act of providence that God exercised toward man in the state in which he was created known as the covenant of life (or works), man’s fall from that state, the covenant of grace provided to the elect through a Redeemer, the

Redeemer is Christ, His dual nature and threefold office as prophet, priest, and king, the application of that redemption by the effectual calling of the Holy Spirit by means of calling, faith, and repentance, and the benefits to those redeemed including justification, adoption, sanctification, and the eternal state.

In 1726, the *Compleat Body of Divinity*, a theology based upon the Westminster Shorter Catechism by Samuel Willard, was published and according to E. Brooks Hollifield it “became an authoritative text in American Reformed theology for the next half century.”² That a systemization of Scripture can be adhered to by a layman is seen today in the average evangelical, pre-tribulation rapture dispensationalist who can state the details of Christ’s second coming. The theological underpinning in this time of foreign missions and the concurrent revivals of the second Great Awakening was a post-millennial hope fanned into flame by a Calvinistic covenant theology.³

The above table reveals the Calvinistic nature of this statement of faith. It expresses all five points of the TULIP acronym (i.e., total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, perseverance of the saints). The Separate Baptists of the Second Baptist Church, Galway were clearly evangelistic and Calvinistic, and their Calvinism did not diminish their zeal to reach the lost.

However, there was an error in articulating the doctrine of the Trinity. Rather than defining God as three persons, He is said to have three offices. A prominent and popular Separate Congregationalist evangelist in Connecticut named Elisha Paine (1693–1775) held to this modalist view.⁴ Backus called Paine, “one of the greatest lawyers in

² E. Brooks Hollifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2003), 62.

³ Iain Murray, *The Puritan Hope: Revival and the Interpretation of Prophecy* (197; repr., Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1975), 107–153.

⁴ C.C. Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England, 1740 – 1800: Strict Congregationalists and Separate Baptists in the Great Awakening* (1962; repr. Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1987), 115–123.

Connecticut, and was in a very prosperous circumstances in the world.”⁵ According to Goen, Paine illustrated his erroneous view of the Trinity by saying that, “a man may stand before the law in several offices without being several persons.”⁶ He thought that affirming three persons in the Trinity was to affirm three gods.⁷ When confronted, Paine confessed that he was taught that there were three persons in the Godhead but claimed the Trinity was all a mystery to him, thereby, avoided being formally denounced as a heretic.⁸

If one acknowledged the three persons in the Trinity and that each person had an office with respect to the salvation of man one could escape the charge of heresy. Joseph Bellamy, a disciple of Jonathan Edwards wrote the following acceptable statement:

The Father is God by nature, and God by office: The Son is God by nature, and Mediator by office. The Spirit is God by nature, and Sanctifier by office.⁹

This aberration in the Articles of Faith of the Second Baptist Church of Galway, the origin of which is currently unknown, may provide a link to a parent document somewhere in New England where Paine labored as an evangelist.

⁵ Isaac Backus, *A History of New England with Particular Reference to the Denomination of Christians Called Baptists*, vol. 2 (1871; repr., Paris, AR: The Baptist Standard Bearer, n.d.), 64.

⁶ Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England*, 120.

⁷ Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England*, 120.

⁸ Goen, *Revivalism and Separatism in New England*, 120–121.

⁹ Joseph Bellamy, *The Works of Joseph Bellamy in Three Volumes* (New York: Stephen Dodge, 1811), 1:296.

APPENDIX 3

HOW TO PRACTICE

The following table is from Second Baptist Church’s earliest record book, dated 1789. This table is essential for understanding the practices of this church on the New York frontier. The order of these written statements in the original church record book is: (1) Articles of Faith, (2) How to Practice, and (3) The Covenant. And these topics are the first entries in the book.

Table A2. How to Practice¹

<p>Firstly We believe that the visable Church of Christ is a Number of his People In mutual agreement Voluntarily and understandingly Covenanting and Embodying together for the carrying on the Worship and discipline of Gods house</p>	<p>THE CHURCH</p> <p>A covenanting body</p>
<p>Secondly We believe that Baptism and the Lord’s Supper are ordinances of Christ to be continued in his Church and practiced by Believers after his own Example until His Second coming the mode of Baptism to be plunging in water and Baptism before the Supper and Believers the only Subjects</p>	<p>BAPTISM & LORD’S SUPPER</p> <p>For believers only</p>
<p>Thirdly We believe that only Saints can Rightly partake of those ordinances therefore the Door of the Church should be carefully kept against all such as cannot give a Scriptural evidence of their union to Christ by Faith</p>	<p>MEMBERSHIP</p> <p>Must give Scriptural evidence of faith</p>
<p>Fourthly We believe the Church hath power to choose and ordain such officers that Christ hath appointed in his church namely Bishops or Elders and Deacons and also depose such officers as evidently appear to walk contrary to the Gospel and to discipline their members altho in some such cases it is convenient and Profitable to request the advice and help of Neighboring Churches of Christ</p>	<p>ELDERS & DEACONS</p> <p>Chosen by church</p>

¹ *Church Record Book of the Second Baptist Church, 1789–1808*, n.p. Spelling and punctuation have been retained.

Table A2 continued

<p>Fifthly We believe a bishop or Elder hath no more power to decide any case or controversy in the Church than any other Brother yet they having superior gifts for teaching and Ruling ought to exercise and Improve the same for the Benefit of the Church and the Church to be subject to the gifts bestowed on the Elder from the Lord while he is Rightly acting in his office whose work it is to lead in the actings of the Church and to Administer the ordinances as Christ had appointed in his Church and devote himself to the work of teaching Warning Rebuking and Exhorting the people Publicly and from House to House</p>	<p>ELDERS Not above brothers (equal vote) To administer ordinances To teach</p>
<p>Sixthly We believe the Deacons office is to take care of the poor and to have the oversight of the Temporal affairs of the Church and to administer at Lords Table</p>	<p>DEACONS Care of poor Temporal affairs Serve Lord's Table</p>
<p>Seventhly We believe Saints are commanded to be faithful to improve every Gift and Talent that is Bestowed on them in order to which there ought to be such a Gospel freedom that the Church may know where every particular Gift is so that it may be Improved in its proper place and to its right end to the Glory of God and the good of His People and the Church ought to be subject to such Improvement and no one ought to go out of the Church to improve without the Fellowship of the Church</p>	<p>GIFTS All are to improve their gifts for the glory of God and the good of His people</p>
<p>Eighthly We Believe that the first Day of the Week ought to be observed as a Day of Religious Worship and that we ought to abstain from all servile Labor on said Day and to assemble ourselves together for religious and Public worship and the service of God and Exercise ourselves in Prayer supplication with thanksgiving and attend on Preaching and Hearing the word on Exhortation and on Singing of Psalms and Spiritual Songs</p>	<p>GATHERING TO WORSHIP ON SUNDAY</p>
<p>Ninthly We believe that the support of the Gospel is an act of Justice and that it is our Duty to support the Minister of the word for if they have served us Spiritual things we think they ought to reap our Carnal things and that we ought to contribute to support the poor of the Church and to bear our Equal part of all necessary expenses that arise in the Church</p>	<p>SUPPORT THE MINISTER, THE POOR & THE CHURCH</p>
<p>Tenthly We Believe that Brethren In Christ that are in solemn Covenant ought not to go to law one with another but all their difficulties and differences should be settled by the Brethren in the Church Yet those that are out of the Church may be Proceed against in A Law way if Right cannot be had without</p>	<p>DO NOT GO TO LAW Settle in Church</p>

Table A2 continued

<p>Eleventhly We Believe that God had Appointed the ordinance of civil government for the Defending of the Poor as well as the rich in their civil Rights and Privileges and the Magistrates work is to punish moral evil and encourage moral Virtue without touching upon anything that infringes on the consciences of worship of God which belongs only to the Lord Jesus Christ the Great head and Lawgiver of his Church</p>	<p>ON CIVIL GOVERNMENT</p>
<p>Twelfthly We Believe that it is the indispensable Duty of every Saint that is the head of A family to carry on the Worship of God in their Family by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving and Intercession and to train up their Children and all committed to their care in the Nurture and admonition of the Lord</p> <p>The end of Practice</p>	<p>FAMILY WORSHIP & NURTURE OF CHILDREN</p>

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ABSTRACT

THE CENTRALITY OF THE CHURCH COVENANT AMONG EARLY SEPARATE BAPTISTS ON THE NEW YORK FRONTIER

Wayne Robert Brandow, ThM
The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020
Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Michael A. G. Haykin

The Separate Baptists who settled New York in the 1780s came from New England. They were both Calvinistic and missions minded. A shortage of pastors necessitated a strong congregational framework and associational ties with other Baptist churches. Many churches were organized without a pastor. These believers, who were settling the newly cleared wilderness, covenanted together in a church relation. The church covenant was not only the instrument to establish a church, but it was also used to sustain its life, as believers covenanted together to provide watch-care over each other. This thesis shows how their congregational polity was exercised in their monthly covenant and conference meetings in which the church covenant was an essential building block. This paper hopes to sound a voice from the past that introduces into current Baptist thinking another model of governance and polity to consider, one used by our Particular Baptist forebearers, in addition to the Presbyterian model prevalent today.

VITA

Wayne Robert Brandow

EDUCATION

BA, Florida Bible College, 1975

MDiv, Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000

ORGANIZATIONS

Secretary, Evangelical Theological Society, Northeast Region

President, Galway Preservation Society

Church Messenger, Reformed Baptist Network

ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

Adjunct Instructor (Baptist and Church History),

Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary, 2001

MINISTERIAL EMPLOYMENT

Pastor, Bible Baptist Church of Galway, Galway, NY 1977–